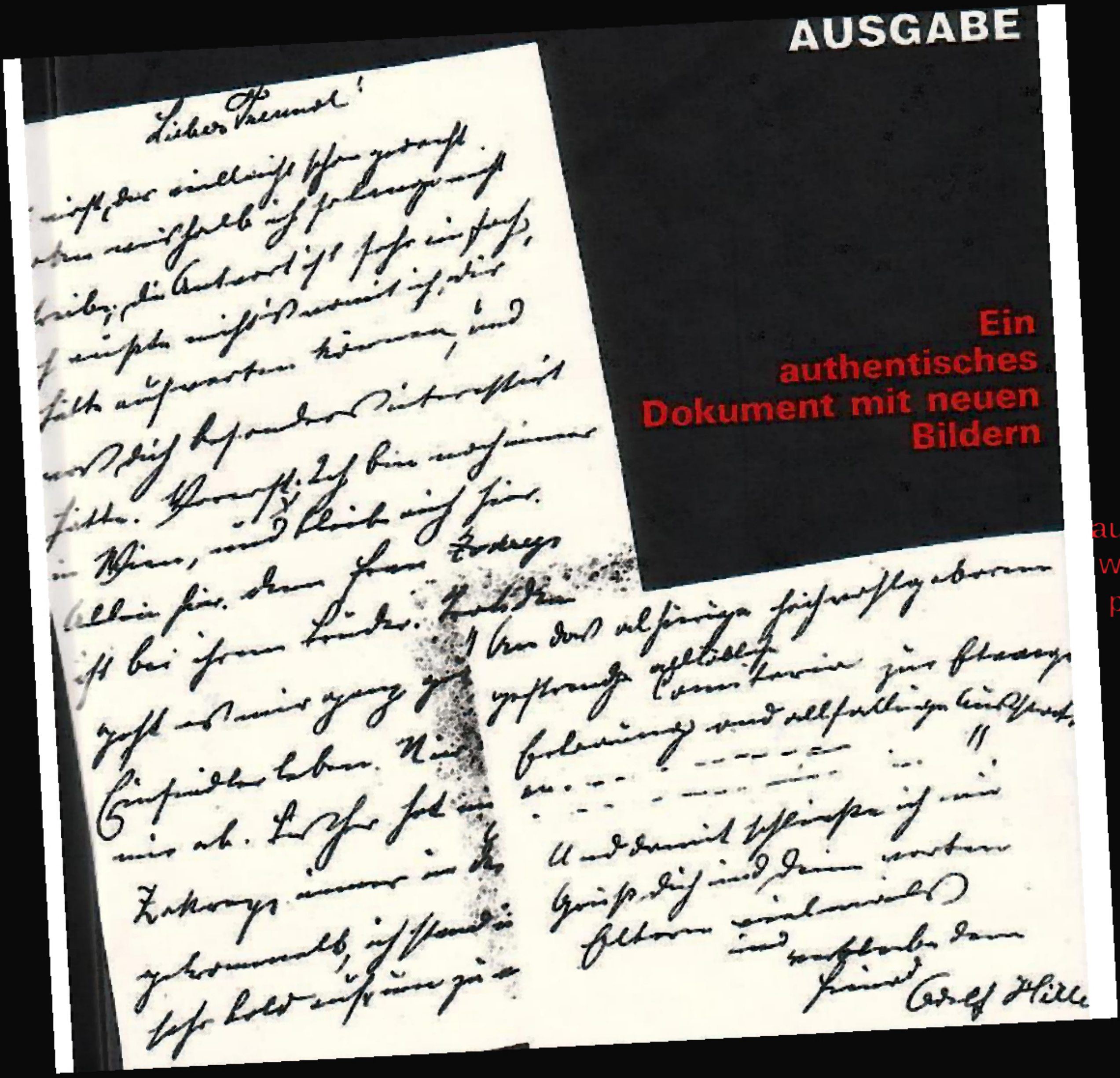
AUGUST KUBIZEK

Adolf Hitler

my childhood friend

SPECIAL
EDITION



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Notes:

- The spelling errors in the quoted original letters were not corrected, but (the identified) typographical errors that occurred in small numbers in the original were (no book is without typographical errors). The book is presented in the old German spelling. This was, of course, also maintained. The remaining error rate should be <1 character per page.
- The formatting was adopted completely; only the page breaks were shifted by up to ±3 lines for a clean presentation.
- In the original, the image pages are not numbered. This "subtlety" was waived during processing due to the "automatic page numbering" used in "Microsoft Word". The two existing "page references" in the text were corrected accordingly.

A. Hitler.
Lhs. 29/III 1906.

A watercolor by Hitler from the year 1906.

KUBIZEK - ADOLF HITLER - MY CHILDHOOD FRIEND

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ADOLF HITLER
MY CHILDHOOD FRIEND

UNABRIDGED SPECIAL EDITION

LEOPOLD STOCKER VERLAG
GRAZ - STUTTGART

Cover design: Paul Mangold

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FOREWORD

In 1951, our publishing house was made aware of August Kubizek, then the 62-year-old municipal office manager of Eferding in Upper Austria and former theater conductor, who had been in very close contact with Hitler for several years during his youth. It was obvious that a statement from Kubizek would be of great importance for the historiography of the dictator, if only because he had been Hitler's only childhood friend on the one hand, and on the other hand, the experiences during the developmental period influence the essence of a person to a high degree. Furthermore, the basic features of character gain their first delicate contours at this stage of life. And it is these basic features that researchers must seek if they wish to explain Hitler's later work as a politician and statesman.

Based on this insight, the publisher asked August Kubizek to take up the pen and to capture that distant time in writing to the best of his knowledge. The highest commandment for him was to be the truth and only the truth; he was to serve it alone.

In terms of character, Kubizek could be fully trusted. He was an idealist who had politely but firmly rejected all of Hitler's offers after 1938 to resign as municipal office manager and return to a leading position in musical life. However, when Hitler's star began to fade, Kubizek, who was inwardly distant from National Socialism, joined the Party because he wanted to prove his loyalty to his childhood friend, especially in difficult times.

After careful consideration and self-examination, Kubizek wrote the manuscript, which was published as a book in 1953 and caused a tremendous sensation. It was translated into several languages (English, French, Spanish, and an American licensed edition), reprinted in excerpts in the world press, and subsequently heavily utilized by historians. When Kubizek died on October 23, 1956, his account had established itself internationally.

The claim expressed in some publications that "guidelines" for a written record of his memories were supposedly agreed upon between the author August Kubizek and the "Main Archive of the NSDAP" in 1938 does not correspond to the actual facts.

The publisher is aware of an agreement between Kubizek and the Main Archive...

not become known; Kubizek's widow writes to us in this regard that her husband had never been to the Main Archive in Munich. Furthermore, the reference to a commission by no means implies that Kubizek was already recording his memoirs at that time. Far more decisive is the fact that Kubizek's nature was in no way suited to writing according to "guidelines." On page 294 of the book, he explicitly emphasizes that during the writing process, he had been "influenced or commissioned by no one."

Since the author is no longer alive and his statements possess documentary value, it goes without saying that the present edition has remained unchanged compared to the earlier ones.

June 1966 Leopold Stocker Verlag

ON THE 4TH EDITION

In view of the continued significant interest, including from science, research, and particularly journalism—which cite the present work extensively as an authentic basis, for example in the recent publications by H. Joachim Fest, Werner Maser, and Robert Payne, and use it as a screenplay template for the television film production by ORF and ZDF "A Young Man from the Innviertel"—the publisher decided on a fourth edition. This edition could, moreover, be supplemented with new pictorial material, which was kindly made available by the author's widow.

February 1975 Leopold Stocker Verlag

DECISION AND JUSTIFICATION

The decision to write down my childhood memories of Adolf Hitler is difficult for me; for the danger of being misunderstood is great. But the sixteen months of American imprisonment, which I had to endure in 1945 as a fifty-seven-year-old, have shaken my health, which was not very resilient to begin with. Thus, I must make use of the days that are still granted to me.

In the years 1904 to 1908, I lived as the sole and exclusive friend at Adolf Hitler's side, first in Linz, then in Vienna, where we lived together in one room. Although these were those years of development in which a person's character gradually takes shape, very little has become known about this revealing period in Adolf Hitler's life, and even that little is not always correct. Hitler himself also contented himself with a few rather fleeting remarks regarding this span of time. Thus, I assume that my explanations can contribute to clarifying the image that the current era forms of Adolf Hitler, regardless of the standpoint from which one may view it. The supreme principle here is: In writing down these childhood memories, I want to add nothing, but also conceal nothing. I only want to say: That is how it was.

Therefore, I would by no means like to see this book categorized among the usual "revelation literature" about Hitler. I have therefore waited to publish this book until this type of literature has run its course and one can expect to be taken seriously by decent and objectively thinking people when publishing a book about Adolf Hitler. It would be wrong to introduce thoughts and views into these shared youth experiences that are typical of Hitler's later periods of life. I have therefore kept myself away from this danger with meticulous care and written down my memories entirely from the perspective of that time, no differently than if this Adolf Hitler, with whom I had formed such a close friendship, had remained an unknown for his entire life or had fallen in the World War.

I am aware of the eminent difficulties of my undertaking to capture events that lie more than forty years in the past and...

to write it down, fully aware. But my friendship with Adolf Hitler bore the stamp of the unusual from the very beginning, so that details have remained more firmly imprinted than is the case with indifferent relationships. Furthermore, however, I felt deeply indebted to Adolf Hitler for the greatest gratitude, because he had succeeded in convincing my father that, by virtue of my special musical talent, I did not belong in the workshop, but at the conservatory. This turning point, decisive for my whole life, which the then eighteen-year-old Hitler was able to push through against the resistance of my surroundings, gave our friendship a higher consecration in my eyes. For this reason, too, so much of it remained in my memory. Added to this is the fact that I, thank God, possess an excellent memory, which is, however, predominantly acoustically oriented. A great help in writing the book was, on the one hand, the preserved letters, postcards, and drawings that I received from my friend, and on the other hand, my own notes, which I had started making a long time ago.

If our people want to regain their so severely damaged self-confidence, they must overcome this so sacrificial period of their history from within themselves, which means without external compulsion. This, however, cannot happen through revelations and one-sided condemnations, but only through an objective, fair, and therefore truly convincing presentation of the historical facts. To this, I hope to contribute something within the modest framework of this book.

Eferding, in August 1953

August Kubizek.

I

YOUTHFUL FRIENDSHIP IN LINZ

FIRST ENCOUNTER

On August 3, 1888, I was born in Linz.

My father was an upholsterer, my grandfather a carpenter. My grandmother came from the countryside; she was a Gillhofer from Peuerbach. My mother was the daughter of a blacksmith who had migrated to the city during the years when the Linz–Budweis horse-drawn railway was being built. He was married to a farmer's daughter from Rosenberg. Through them, people from the homeland of Adalbert Stifter entered our family circle. My mother had much of the character of a woman from the Bohemian Forest about her.

Before my father married, he was employed as an upholsterer's assistant at the Linz furniture company Müller and Son on Bethlehemstraße. At noon, he ate in the small dining room on Bischofsstraße, which still exists today. Here he met my mother, who was employed as a waitress in this establishment, where there was no obligation to drink. The two took a liking to each other. In July 1887, they entered into marriage.

Initially, the young couple found accommodation in the apartment of my mother's parents at Hafnerstraße 35. My father's wages were low, the work strenuous. My mother was in a blessed state and had given up her position. Thus, I was born under sad circumstances. A year later, my sister Maria was born, who, however, died in earliest infancy. Another year later, Therese was born. She died at the age of four. My third sister, Karoline, fell seriously ill, wasted away for some time, and died when she was eight years old. My mother's grief was incomprehensible. Throughout her life, she suffered from the idea that she would have to lose me as well. Of her four children, I was the only one who had remained alive. Thus, all of the mother's love remained attached to me.

A strange parallel in our fates showed itself here. Hitler's mother had also lost three children to death: Gustav, Ida, and Otto. Adolf was likewise for a long time the only child of his mother who had remained alive. Edmund, too, who was born five years after Adolf, died at the age of six. Only Paula, Hitler's sister who was seven years younger, remained alive. In the nature of both mothers, there was much in common. And Adolf and I too, even if we were in youthful arrogance from our deceased siblings, we nevertheless felt somewhat distinguished by fate, survivors of a very endangered kin, so to speak, to whom a special obligation was thereby assigned. That Adolf occasionally, certainly unconsciously, called me Gustav instead of August—a postcard written to me also shows this first name in the address, which his first deceased brother had borne—was perhaps connected with the common short form Gustl, but perhaps he wanted to please his mother when he transferred this name to me, who had been taken into the Hitler family like a son. I cannot remember the details of it.

In the meantime, my father had become self-employed and opened a tapestry business in the house at Klammstraße 9. The old, somewhat square and clumsy Baernreither house, which has survived the times unchanged, now became the site of my childhood and youth. I must describe the events and experiences of that time more precisely, although they are quite insignificant in themselves, in order to evoke the atmosphere in which my youth friendship with Adolf Hitler took place. The narrow, gloomy Klammstraße, where the poet Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn also lived for a time, looked somewhat meager in comparison with the broad, bright Promenade, enlivened by lawns and tree arrangements, of which it forms a continuation.

Certainly, the unhealthy living conditions were also to blame for the early death of my sisters. This became different in the Baernreither house. The workshop was now on the ground floor, and the apartment, consisting of two rooms and a kitchen, was on the first floor. But my father now hardly emerged from economic worries. Business was bad. More than once he was close to closing the operation and re-entering the furniture factory as a worker. But each time he became master of the difficulties at the last moment.

I started school, a rather unpleasant affair. My good mother cried over the bad grades I brought home. Her grief was the only thing that could spur me to greater diligence. While for my father it was fixed from the beginning that I must one day take over his business—why else did he toil from morning till night!—my mother wanted me to study later despite the poor school results. First I was to attend four classes of Gymnasium, then perhaps the teacher training college. But I wanted to know nothing of that. I was happy when my father spoke a word of power and, when I had turned ten years old, sent me to the Bürgerschule. With that, in my father's view, my future life was decided once and for all.

But for a long time another power had entered my life, to which I...

devoted myself body and soul: music. This love found visible expression when I, then nine years old, received a violin as a gift for Christmas 1897. I still remember every detail of this celebration exactly, and when I look back today in my old age, my conscious life begins, so to speak, with this event. The eldest son of our neighbors was a candidate for the teaching profession and instructed me in playing the violin. I learned quickly and well. What joys opened up before me! When my first violin teacher graduated and was transferred to the countryside, I entered the Linz Music School as an elementary student, but the teaching operation there appealed to me less, perhaps because I was already too far ahead of the other students. After the holidays I received private lessons again, specifically from an old k. u. k. (Imperial and Royal) music sergeant, who first of all made it clear to me that I knew nothing at all, and then taught me the elementary concepts of violin playing in a "military fashion." It was a real drill with old Kopetzky. When I sometimes grew weary of the harsh sergeant's tone, he comforted me and assured me that with further progress I would certainly be accepted as a student into the k. u. k. regimental music, which in his view represented the pinnacle of musical fame. I resigned my studies with Kopetzky, entered the middle level of the music school, and found in Professor Heinrich Dessauer a teacher who was as professionally capable as he was pedagogically gifted and extremely sensitive. As a minor subject, I took trumpet and trombone as well as general music theory and already participated in the student orchestra. I was already occasionally secretly playing with the thought of making music my life's profession. Not in the direction of the music sergeant Kopetzky, but rather in the line of my highly revered teacher Dessauer, I dreamed of a beautiful future. But reality approached me harshly. Hardly had I finished middle school when I had to enter my father's business as an apprentice. I had already occasionally had to lend a hand in the workshop when there was a shortage of manpower and soon found my way around the work. Teasing out old upholstery is a loathsome job. First, it means ripping open the entire piece of furniture down to the webbing base, removing the stitching layer, unfastening the stuffing linen, and clearing out the filling material. Often the spring linen had also become damaged or the steel springs were even already rusting! With the carding machine, an iron drum equipped with grilled rollers that is set into rapid motion with the help of a crank, I then had to bring the filling—tow, horsehair, or African fiber—into a loose, swelling state. All this took place in clouds of dust, so that the apprentice was often hardly visible in it. What old mattresses were often brought into the workshop to us! All the diseases that in whether the beds had been endured or not could have been registered there. No wonder that upholsterers do not grow old.

But soon I had also grasped the good sides of the upholsterer's trade: artistic sense and personal taste play a significant role in it, and the step to interior design is not far. One entered distinguished houses, saw much, heard much, and above all: in winter one had little or nothing to do. And this time naturally belonged to music. When I had successfully passed my journeyman's examination before the examination commission of the craft guilds, my father wanted me to look around in other workshops. This made sense to me, but I did not judge based on the necessities of the learned trade, but rather on the further progress in my musical education. So I remained as a journeyman in my father's workshop, because there I could dispose of my time much more freely than under a foreign master.

"There are usually too many violins in the orchestra, but violas — that's what's missing!" I am still grateful to Professor Dessauer today that he made me a capable violist based on this experience. The musical life of the city of Linz was at a considerable height at that time. August Göllerich was the director of the Linz Music Society at that time. As a student of Liszt and a collaborator of Richard Wagner at the Bayreuth Festival, Göllerich was the appointed man to musically lead Linz, which was then so often maligned as a "peasant town" and always looked down upon by the glamorous metropolis of Vienna. The Music Society organized three symphony concerts annually as well as an extraordinary concert, in which usually a larger choral work with orchestra was performed. My mother, although coming from a simple family of craftsmen, was extremely fond of music and hardly missed one of these performances. Even as a little rascal, I was taken along to the concert hall. My mother made the most difficult things understandable to me, and since I now already moderately mastered several instruments myself, my understanding of these events also grew. My highest goal seemed to be to participate in the large orchestra of the Music Society, be it with the viola or the trumpet.

But that still had a good while to go. For the time being, it meant fluffing up old, dusty mattresses and papering room walls. The usual occupational ailments of upholsterers became noticeable in my father during those years. When a stubborn pulmonary apex catarrh tied him to his bed for half a year, I had to run the workshop alone. Thus, in my young life, both ran sharply separated side by side. The work, to which my strength (and probably also my lungs) belonged, and the music, to which my whole love was devoted. I would never have believed that between the two there...

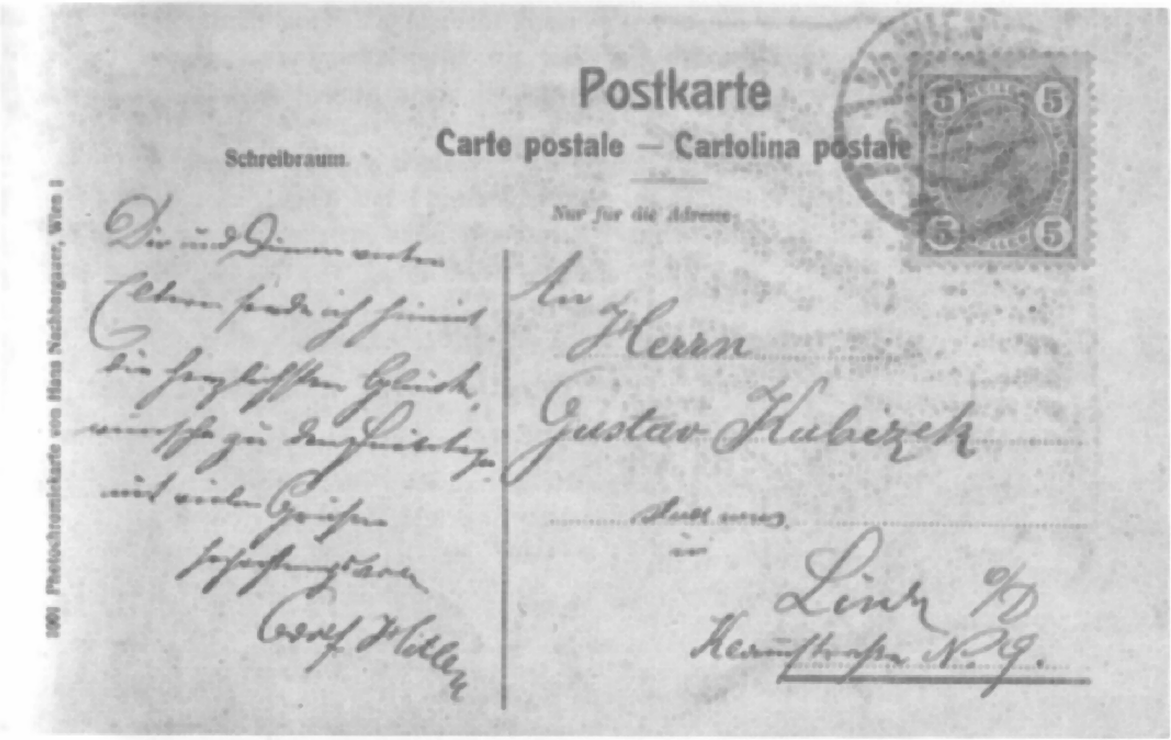
could provide a connection. And yet it was so. Fate intervened and grabbed me firmly by the scruff of my neck.

Among the clientele of my father's business was the nearby Imperial-Royal Governor's Office, which, among other things, was also in charge of the theater. One day, the cushions of a Rococo suite were brought from there to our workshop to be refurbished. The corners of the cushions were worn through, and the covers were partially torn. The seats and backrests were upholstered on wooden frames. The new covers were ordered in blue and white. When the cushions had been repaired, my father sent me over to the theater with them one morning, which was located not far from our house. The property master directed me onto the stage, where I was to fit the cushions into the wooden frames, which were painted white; the carvings on them were even gilded. A rehearsal was just underway on the stage. I no longer remember which piece was being rehearsed at the time, in any case, it was an opera. But I still feel as clearly as if it were happening today the ecstasy that overcame me then, as I stood on the stage next to the actors and singers. How transformed I was, no different than if I had discovered myself for the first time at that very moment. Theater! What a world! There stood a man, magnificently dressed. He appeared to me like a being from another planet. He sang so gloriously that I could not even imagine that this man could have spoken like an ordinary person. The orchestra responded to his mighty voice... I already understood a bit about that. But in that hour, everything that music had meant to me until then seemed insignificant. Only the connection with the stage elevated the music to a higher, solemn level, the highest imaginable. But there I stood, a wretched upholsterer's apprentice, in front of the Rococo suite, fitting the refurbished cushions into the frames. What a miserable business, what a pitiful existence! Theater — that was the world I had been seeking. Illusion and reality swapped places in my excited senses. The clumsy journeyman who stood there — like a comic figure from a Nestroy play — hair disheveled, with a restless gaze, in an apron and rolled-up sleeves, standing before the scenery and busying himself with cushions and chairs as if he had to justify his presence by doing so — was he really just a poor upholsterer's apprentice who had just come from the carding machine? A poor, despised wretch, constantly pushed back and forth, one whom the "gracious lady," who was having her boudoir upholstered, treats not much differently than a stepladder — you put it here, you put it there, wherever you happen to need it, and when you no longer need it, you put it away. It would have been perfectly fine if that upholsterer's apprentice, tool in hand, had stepped forward to the footlights at that moment and, by the conductor encouraged by a secret sign, would have sung his part, only to prove to the listeners in the stalls (who were not even there) — what do I mean, listeners? — to prove to the listening world that he was in truth someone quite different from that pale, lanky apprentice from the upholsterer's workshop in Klammgasse, that he actually belonged on the stage, in the theater...

From that hour on, I was enthralled by the theater and have remained so to this day. While I was treating a wall to be papered with glue-water at a customer's house and then pasting on the wastepaper prepared with black-flour paste, I dreamed of roaring successes in the theater, already seeing myself as a Kapellmeister at the conductor's podium. Such dreams did not greatly benefit my work, and it could happen that the strips of wallpaper pasted onto the wastepaper shifted precariously. But upon returning to the workshop, a renewed bout of illness suffered by my father quickly made me realize what responsibility weighed upon me.

So I oscillated back and forth between dream and reality. At home, no one suspected how things stood with me; for before I would have said a single word about my hidden desires, I would rather have bitten off my tongue. I also kept my secret plans from my mother. Yet she might perhaps have sensed what was troubling me. But should I increase her worries further with new ones? Thus, I had no one in whom I could confide. I felt very forsaken, cast out from the world, and was as lonely as only a young person can be lonely when the beauty and danger of life have been revealed to them for the first time.

The theater gave me new courage. I did not miss a single opera performance. No matter how tired I was from work, nothing could stop me from still going to the theater. Naturally, with the modest allowance my father paid me as a journeyman's wage, I could only take a standing room spot. I therefore regularly went to the so-called standing pit, for there one had the best view. Furthermore, I found that nowhere was the acoustics as good and complete as here. Above the standing pit, in the middle of the dress circle, was the Royal Box, which was supported from below by two wooden columns. These columns exerted a special attraction on the visitors of the standing pit because they offered the only possibility to lean back without having to sacrifice part of the view; for if one leaned against the back wall, the columns stood in the line of sight. I was happy when, after standing on the stepladder all day papering, I could lean my aching back against the smooth column! Of course, one had to be at the entrance in good time so as not to miss this opportunity.



Postkarte

Carte postale — Cartolina postale

Schreibraum.

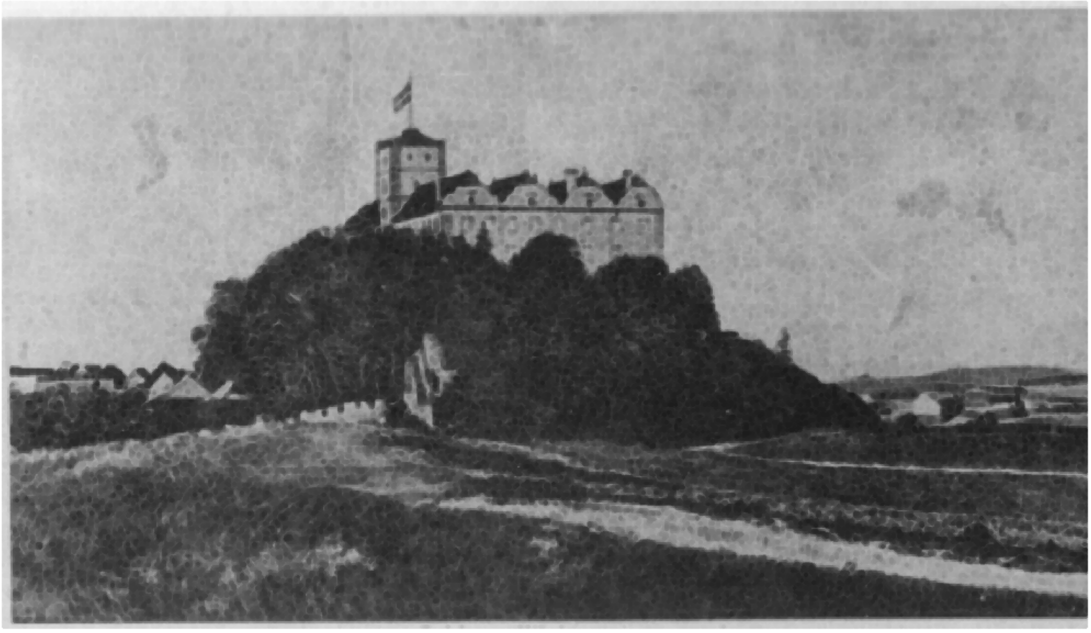
Nur für die Adresse.

Photochromiekarte von Hans Nachbargauer, Wien I

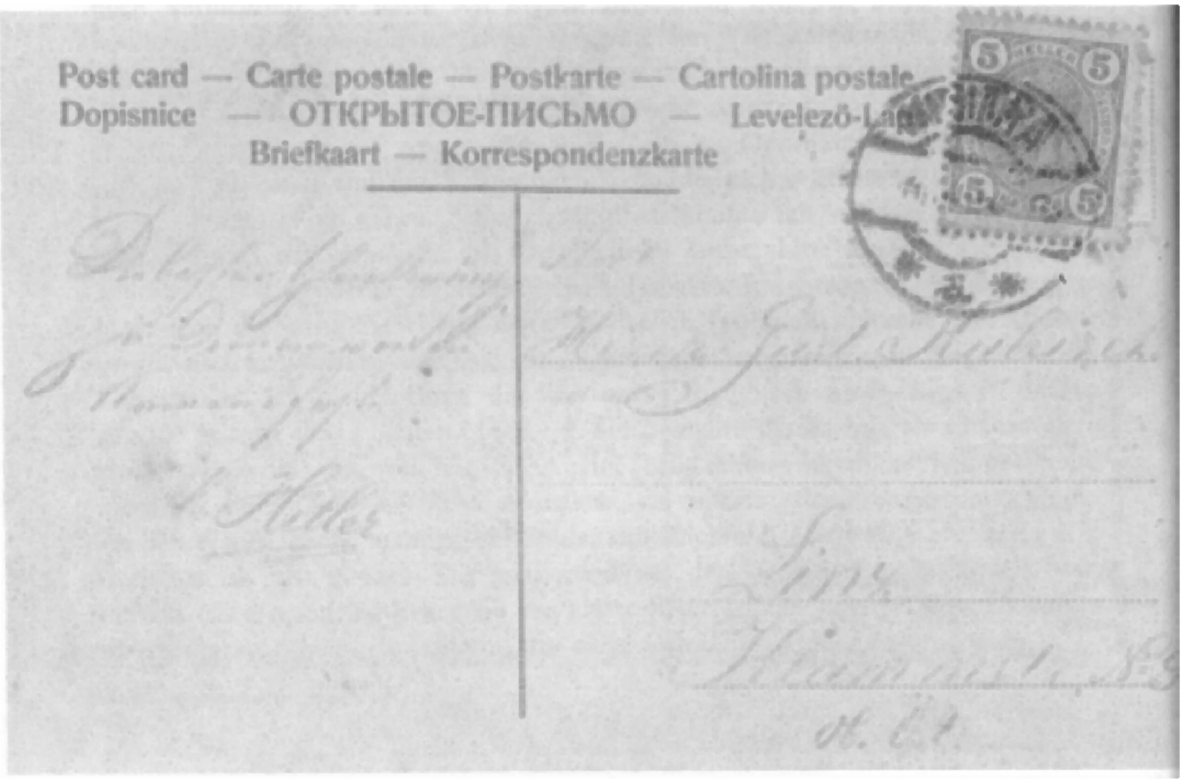
Dir und Deinen werten
Eltern sende ich hiemit
die herzlichsten Glück-
wünsche zu den Feiertagen
mit vielen Grüßen
hochachtungsvoll
Adolf Hitler

An
Herrn
Gustav Kubizek
Stud. mus.
in
Linz a/D
Klammstraße N. 9.

A postcard greeting from Adolf Hitler to Kubizek from his first trip to Vienna.



Weitra Castle.



Post card — Carte postale — Postkarte — Cartolina postale
Dopisnice — ОТКРЫТОЕ-ПИСЬМО — Levelező-Lap
Briefkaart — Korrespondenzkarte

WEITRA

Die besten Glückwünsche
[illegible]
[illegible]
A. Hitler

Herrn Gustl Kubizek
Linz
Klammstr. N. 9
[illegible]

A postcard greeting from Hitler to the author from Weitra in the Waldviertel, with best wishes for his name day.

Often it is precisely the incidental things that imprint themselves particularly stubbornly in the memory. I can still see clearly, rushing hurriedly into the standing area of the stalls, the pillars before me, wondering whether I should take the left or the right one. Often, however, one of the two pillars, the right one, was already occupied; someone else had even more zeal than I. Half annoyed, half astonished, I observed my competitor. He was a strikingly pale, slender youth, about the same age as I, who followed the performance with glowing eyes. He certainly came from a better home, for he was always dressed with meticulous care and was extremely reserved.

We took notice of each other without saying anything. But during one of the next performances — I no longer know today whether it was "Der Freischütz," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," or the then frequently performed "Der Evangelimann" — we struck up a conversation during the intermission because we were apparently both dissatisfied with a certain casting. We spoke about it and rejoiced in our shared negative judgment. I was amazed at the other's quick and sure powers of perception. In that, he was undoubtedly superior to me. On the other hand, I felt my superiority when the conversation turned to purely musical matters. I can no longer determine the day of this first discussion with complete certainty. But in any case, it was around All Saints' Day in the year 1904.

It remained that way for a while. The other had not yet told anything about himself. So I, too, did not consider it necessary to tell anything about myself. But we occupied ourselves all the more intensively with the respective performance and felt, in doing so, that the same enthusiasm for the theater existed in both of us.

After the performance, I once accompanied the other home. In the process, I learned that he lived at house number 31 on Humboldtstraße. When we said our goodbyes, he gave his name: Adolf Hitler.

From then on, we met at every opera performance, then also made arrangements to meet outside the theater and usually strolled together in the evenings along the Landstraße.

Linz, which in the last decade has become a modern industrial city and has taken in people from all areas of the vast Danube region, was at that time still a city strongly defined by its rural character. In the suburbs, the stately, castle-like four-sided courtyards of the farmers still stood, and in the midst of rising apartment buildings there were still meadows where cattle grazed leisurely. In the taverns, people sat over the local cider. Everywhere the broad, comfortable dialect of the region could still be heard. There were only horse-drawn vehicles in the city, and the teamsters were the most vigorous in ensuring that Linz remained "in the country." The bourgeoisie, although largely of peasant origin themselves and often related by blood or marriage to the rural population, separated themselves all the more sharply from the rural classes the closer they still were to them inwardly. Almost all the influential families of the city knew each other. The business world, the civil service, and the garrison set the tone of society. Those who held themselves in high regard met in the evenings for a stroll on the city's main street, which leads from the station to the Danube bridge and is significantly called "Landstraße." Since Linz had no university, young people of all classes and ranks imitated student customs all the more eagerly. The social activity on the Landstraße did not lag far behind the evening life on the Vienna Ringstraße. At least, the people of Linz imagined so.

Hitler seemed to have little patience; for if I was ever not punctual at the agreed meeting point, he immediately came into the workshop to pick me up, regardless of whether I just had an old, black oilcloth sofa, a Baroque wing chair, or something else to repair. He regarded my work merely as a tiresome hindrance to our personal interaction. Impatiently, he swung the small black walking stick that he always carried with him. I wondered that he had so much time at his disposal, and innocently asked if he was not also employed somewhere.

"Not at all!" was the brusque answer.

To this word, which seemed very unusual to me, he attached a longer explanation. For himself, he did not consider a specific job, a "bread-and-butter profession," as he put it, to be necessary.

I had never heard such words from anyone before. They contradicted everything that had previously been considered principles in my life. I originally took his talk for mere youthful boasting, although Adolf Hitler, given his demeanor and the absolutely serious and confident way in which he spoke, did not seem like a boaster at all. In any case, I was very surprised by his views, but at first I did not ask further; for he seemed to be very sensitive to inappropriate questions. I had already gathered that much. It was more sensible to speak of "Lohengrin," the opera that enthralled us time and again above all others, than of personal matters.

Perhaps he was the son of wealthy parents, I thought; perhaps he has received a large inheritance and can afford to live without a "bread-and-butter profession"—the word had taken on a downright contemptuous tone in his mouth! I by no means considered him an idler, for there was not a glimmer of a superficial, frivolous do-nothing about him. When we strolled past Café Baumgartner, today's Café Schönberger, he could not get worked up enough about the young people who sat there behind the glass panes at the marble tables like in a large display window, idly chatting away the time, without apparently becoming aware of the contradiction to his own way of life. Perhaps some who sat "in the display window" already had a steady profession and a secure income, which was still doubtful in his case.

Perhaps this Hitler is a student? This had been my first impression of him. The black ebony cane with the delicate ivory shoe as a handle was also a decidedly student-like prop. However, it then surprised me that he chose a simple journeyman upholsterer of all people as a friend, who was always afraid that one could still smell the glue-water on the stroll, which he had to deal with during the day. If Hitler was a student, he had to go to school somewhere. Unexpectedly, I brought the conversation around to school.

"School?" It was the first outburst of anger I experienced from him. He wanted absolutely nothing to do with school. School no longer concerned him, he declared. He hated the professors and no longer greeted any of them, and he also hated his fellow students, who in school were only being raised to be do-nothings. No, I must not come to him with school. I told him how little success I myself had had in school. "Why no success?" he wanted to know. It did not please him at all that I, in school, which...

he had fared poorly in the very thing he so despised. I could not make sense of this contradiction. But I could gather this much from the conversation: that he must have attended a school until recently, presumably a secondary school, the Gymnasium or perhaps the Realschule, and that this attendance had presumably ended in a catastrophe. Otherwise, this radical rejection would hardly have been conceivable. Furthermore, I constantly discovered new contradictions and riddles in him. At times, he became downright uncanny to me. Once, as we were walking across the Freinberg, Hitler suddenly stopped, pulled a small black book —I can still see it before me today and could describe it in every detail!—out of his pocket and read me a poem he had written himself.

I no longer remember the poem itself; more precisely, I can no longer distinguish it from the poems that Adolf read to me later. But I still remember exactly what a powerful impression the fact made on me that my friend wrote poetry and carried his poems around with him as naturally as I had to carry my upholstery tools. When Hitler later also presented me with drawings he had made, plans he had designed—somewhat confused, cluttered plans that I couldn't make sense of for a long time—when he explained to me that he had much more and better work kept in his room and was determined to devote his life entirely to art, I gradually understood how things stood with my friend. He belonged to that special species of human being of which I myself had dreamed in bold moments; an artist who despised the naked "bread-and-butter job" and occupied himself with poetry, drawing, painting, and visiting the theater. That impressed me immensely. I shuddered at the greatness of what I was experiencing. My ideas of an artist were still very hazy back then—Hitler probably still imagined something very hazy by it as well. But it was all the more alluring for that.

Hitler spoke only rarely of his relatives. He said it was advisable anyway not to associate too much with adults, for they only distracted one from one's own intentions with their peculiar views. For example, his guardian, a farmer in Leonding named Mayrhofer, was absolutely convinced that he should learn a trade. His brother-in-law was also of this opinion.

I concluded from this that very complicated family circumstances must have prevailed for Hitler. Apparently, among all adults, he allowed only one single person to count: his mother!

Yet he was only about sixteen years old, nine months younger than I.

Furthermore, his views, which deviated from every conventional bourgeois conception, did not bother me at all. On the contrary! It was precisely the unusual nature of his being that attracted me even more strongly. That he had dedicated his life to art was for me the highest revelation a young person could offer; for I was secretly flirting with the same decision: to cross over from the dusty, noisy upholstery business into the pure, lofty realms of art and devote myself entirely to music. It is by no means a matter of indifference to young people in what place they meet for their first friendship. That our friendship had begun in the theater, before a brilliant stage and rushing music, seemed to me almost like a symbol. In a certain sense, our friendship itself existed in this happy atmosphere.

Moreover, I found myself in a similar situation to Hitler himself. School lay behind me and had nothing more to give me. Despite all my love and devotion to my parents, adults meant very little to me. And above all: although so much about me was still open and questionable, I had no one in whom I could confide.

Nevertheless, it was initially a difficult friendship, for our natures were fundamentally different. While I was a quiet, somewhat dreamy youth, very empathetic and adaptable, and therefore yielding—a "musical character," so to speak—Hitler was exceedingly violent and high-spirited. Harmless things, a few thoughtless words perhaps, could provoke outbursts of anger in him, in which, in my opinion, the emotional expenditure was out of all proportion to the triviality of the matter. But I probably did not understand Adolf correctly on this point. Perhaps the difference between us lay in the fact that he took things seriously that remained a matter of indifference to me. Yes, this was one of the particularly typical characteristics about him: everything occupied and unsettled him; nothing remained a matter of indifference to him.

But despite all the difficulties arising from the difference in our characters, our friendship itself was never seriously in danger. Nor was it the case, as often happens with young people, that we became estranged and indifferent to each other over time. On the contrary! In external matters, we showed increasing consideration for one another. It sounds strange, but the same person who held relentlessly to his standpoint could immediately be so considerate that he shamed me again and again. Thus, over time, we became completely accustomed to each other.

In general, I soon realized that the continued existence of our friendship did not ultimately rested on the fact that I could listen patiently. But I felt by no means unhappy in this passive role; for it was precisely then that I felt most clearly how much my friend needed me. He, too, stood completely alone. His father had been dead for two years. His mother, as devotedly as he loved her, could no longer help him in the matters that occupied him. I remember how he often gave me a long lecture on things that did not interest me at all, such as the consumption tax collected at the Danube bridge, or a charity lottery for which collections were just being made in the streets. He simply had to speak and needed someone to listen to him. I was often amazed when he delivered a speech before me alone with lively gestures. It never bothered him that I alone was the audience. But a young person who, like my friend, took in what he saw and experienced with unusual intensity, required some means to be able to endure the tensions conjured up by his impetuous temperament. These tensions found immediate expression in him through his speaking and talking about them. Such speeches, usually somewhere outdoors, under the trees of the Freinberg, in the floodplains of the Danube, often acted like volcanic discharges. It broke out of him as if something foreign, something completely different, were surging up within him. I had previously experienced such ecstasies only in the theater with actors who had to express some kind of feeling, and at first, I was no more than a concerned and bewildered listener who, out of astonishment, forgot to applaud at the end. But I soon realized that this "theater" was no theater at all. No, that was not acted, not exaggerated, not "put on"; it was directly experienced. I also saw how bitterly serious he was about it. Time and again I had to marvel at how skillfully he knew how to express himself, how vividly he was able to describe everything that moved him, how eloquently the words flowed from his mouth when he let himself be completely carried away by a sensation. It was not what he said that pleased me at first, but how he spoke. That was something new, something magnificent for me. I had not known at all that a person could achieve so much with the help of mere words. From me, he expected only one thing: agreement. I soon figured that out. It was also not difficult for me to agree with him, because I had not thought at all about many of the questions he touched upon.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that our friendship was exhausted in this one-sided relationship. That would have been too cheap for Adolf and too little for me. What remained essential was that we complemented each other excellently. In him, everything pushed toward active positioning and demanded the strongest inner participation; for fundamentally, his elementary emotional outbursts were proof of how passionately he [was attached to] everything took part. I, basically a contemplative and meditative nature, absorbed what moved him more or less without reservation and, apart from musical questions, gladly let myself be convinced by him.

However, I must admit that Adolf made unheard-of demands on me. He disposed of my free time completely arbitrarily. Since he himself was not bound to any fixed schedule, I had to submit entirely to his wishes. He demanded everything from me, but was also ready to do everything for me. There was simply no other possibility for me. With the complete claim he laid on me, I would not have had the time to cultivate another friendship alongside it. I felt no need for it either; for Adolf replaced a dozen more or less indifferent friends for me. Actually, only one thing could have separated us: a girl with whom we both fell in love; then things would probably have come to a head. I was seventeen years old at the time. So something of this kind could well have happened. But in this very point, fate had such a unique solution in store for both of us—I will describe it later in the chapter "Stefanie"—that our friendship was by no means disturbed, but on the contrary, deepened quite significantly.

I knew from him that he too—besides me—had no other friend. A small, apparently incidental occurrence has remained so clearly in my memory as if it had happened only yesterday. Adolf had picked me up from home. From Klammstrasse we walked the usual way across the Promenade and turned into Landstrasse. That is where it happened. I could still point out the street corner today where the following took place. A young lad, about the same age as us, sailed around the corner, a somewhat dandyishly dressed, chubby-cheeked little gentleman. He recognized his former classmate in Adolf, stopped, grinned with joy all over his face and shouted: "Servus, Hitler!" At the same time, he familiarly grabbed him by the coat sleeve and asked with sincere interest how he was doing. I was prepared for Adolf to answer his schoolmate just as friendly, since he placed so much value on good, polite behavior. But the redness of anger rose to my friend's face. I already knew this change in his countenance from other occasions and knew that it meant nothing good. "That's none of your damn business!" he shouted excitedly into his face and pushed him back roughly. Then he grabbed me by the arm and continued his way with me, without bothering about the other, whose perplexed face with the twitching red chubby cheeks stands before my eyes even today. "All future civil servants!" Adolf said to me, still furious, "and I sat in a class with such creatures!" It took a long time before he calmed down.

A second event, occurring somewhat later in time, has likewise remained in my memory. My revered violin teacher Heinrich Dessauer had died. Hitler joined me at the funeral. I was surprised by this, because he had not known Professor Dessauer at all. To my astonished question, he replied: "Because I cannot stand it when you go and speak with other young people."

There were many things, even insignificant ones, that could put him into a state of agitation. But he flared up most strongly when there was talk of him becoming a civil servant. If the keyword "civil servant" was mentioned anywhere, even if it was not spoken in connection with his future, he was guaranteed to have a fit of rage. I realized that these outbursts of anger were, in a certain sense, still arguments with his long-deceased father, who had desperately wanted to make him a state official—"belated speeches of defense," so to speak.

For our friendship at that time, it was in any case necessary that I thought as little of the civil service as he did himself. Given his almost rabid rejection of a career as an official, I could now explain to myself why he preferred a simple upholsterer's apprentice as a friend over one of those polished sons of court councilors, who already carried around in their heads a staffing plan secured through patronage, connections, and political ties, and thus already knew the prospective course of their lives in advance. Hitler was the exact opposite of that. With him, everything remained in uncertainty. There was a second positive prerequisite that predestined me to be his friend in Adolf's eyes: I too, like himself, unconditionally assigned primacy to art in a person's life. Of course, we could not formulate this realization with such high-flown words back then. But we lived all the more emphatically by this principle in practice, for the practice of music had long since become the decisive factor in my life. Work in the workshop merely had to secure my external existence. For my friend, however, art was much more; given the intense way in which he took in, examined, rejected, and discarded everything around him, given his uncanny seriousness, and this constant involvement in everything, he required a counterweight. This he found in art alone.

Thus, I possessed all the prerequisites for him that were necessary for a friendship: I had nothing in common with his former schoolmates, had nothing to do with the civil service, and lived entirely for art. Furthermore, I understood a great deal about music.

The similarity of our inclinations bound us to one another just as much as the diversity of our temperaments. I leave it to others to...

to judge whether people who, like Hitler, go their way with the certainty of a sleepwalker, find the person they necessarily need for a certain stretch of the way by chance out of the crowd, or whether it is a certain providence that brings this person to meet them at the decisive moment. I can only state the fact that from the meeting in the theater until his later descent into the Viennese time of misery, to which I no longer belonged, I was that person for Adolf Hitler.

THE PORTRAIT OF THE YOUNG HITLER

Unfortunately, I must begin this section with a negative statement: I possess no photograph that would show Adolf Hitler during the years of our friendship. I also do not remember ever having owned one. Probably no image of Hitler from this period exists at all.

In itself, the lack of photographic records from those years is quite understandable. In the time shortly after the turn of the century, there were not yet any photographic cameras that one could conveniently carry around. And had there been such devices, the two of us certainly would not have owned one; for we were poor devils who sacrificed our last Kreuzer for an opera performance or a symphony concert. If one wanted to be photographed, one went to the "studio." That was a matter as cumbersome as it was expensive, which one considered thoroughly beforehand. Actually, one was only photographed on special occasions such as baptisms, confirmations, or weddings. My friend, as far as I can remember, never felt a need to be photographed. He was, in fact, anything but vain. As much as he was preoccupied with himself, vanity in the ordinary sense was foreign to him. I would say that being vain was too little for him. He was too intelligent for that and, moreover, so convinced of his own special nature that there was no room for vanity, not even when Stefanie entered his life. Perhaps this lack of vanity is to blame for the fact that there are no portraits of him as a youth. I have several of myself.

One can count the truly authentic portraits from the childhood and youth of Adolf Hitler that have become known so far on the fingers of one hand.

First, there is the well-known photograph taken of little Adolf in 1889; a few months after his birth. This small, delicate childhood portrait already contains everything that is later typical of Hitler's physiognomy. The peculiar proportions of the nose, cheeks, and mouth, the light, piercing eyes, even the hair combed down onto the forehead—all still characterized by childlike simplicity. Yet another circumstance is particularly striking in this first portrait of Hitler: Adolf's great resemblance to his mother. I noticed this resemblance when I saw Mrs.

...noticed immediately when I saw Hitler for the first time. However, it becomes clear to anyone who compares this childhood portrait with the portrait of his mother, which, by the way, is also a photographic masterpiece. The resemblance is absolutely striking. One might say he was the spitting image of her. In contrast, Paula, Adolf's sister, completely resembled the father. I no longer knew Adolf's father and must therefore rely on the mother's statements.

There follow the pictures from Hitler's school days, consistently group photographs of the school class he attended at the time. Individual pictures from this period have not become known. Where such appear, they are excerpts from these class photos. One remembers well how it went back then. The photographer announced himself. The class gathered in the schoolyard. The bottom row had to sit on the ground or lie on the ground, propped up on their elbows to the left or right, so that a perfectly symmetrical image was created; the next classmates sat on benches, the following stood on them, and for the last ones, benches were even stacked on top of each other. I describe this only because the tension that this preparation triggered in the children is clearly readable on their faces and prevented a free, unconstrained expression. With serious, thoroughly unchildlike school faces, they now stared at the lens.

The student Hitler is difficult to find among these forty or more faces, which, especially in the rural primary school class, resemble each other like one egg to another. Usually, an arrow or a cross must first direct the viewer to the correct face. The only expression that can be read from it is one of reserved curiosity as to how this circumstantial photographer will bring his business to an end. One must be careful not to read things into this closed school face that are not there. I would only like to point out one thing: Hitler's countenance is always the same in these recordings. Although a considerable span of time lies between the individual recordings, it is always the same, strange face, as if it had not changed. I find that in this, still completely unconsciously, that peculiar consistency is expressed, that inability-to-change, which appears to me to be Hitler's most essential character trait. It has also been pointed out that Hitler always chose a preferred spot in these group pictures. In the class photo of 1899 from the fourth grade of primary school in Leonding, Hitler stands in the middle of the top row; in the photo from 1901, in the first class of the Linz Realschule, he stands again in the top row, this time on the far right.

That would be all there is to say about the portraits of the young Hitler, were it not for the coincidence of a drawing by a classmate from the fourth...

class of the Realschule in Steyr, the last school class that Hitler attended, would have been preserved. The drawing dates from the year 1905.

This classmate Sturmlechner, who portrayed the young Hitler and proudly wrote on the upper margin: "From nature," was, of course, an amateur. One can see this in his drawing, which is anything but artistic. Sturmlechner was probably only able to draw in profile because he stuck to it so strictly. Whatever deviated from the profile caused him difficulties. The nose is poorly drawn; in the drawing of the hair, his art failed completely, even if the hair happened to look "from nature" like that at the time. Nevertheless, there is a peculiar charm to the pencil sketch, as the expression is unaffected and natural. If I take only the concise profile from Sturmlechner's sketch, the image coincides almost exactly with the memory-image that I carry within me of my childhood friend.

The Sturmlechner drawing has had a very eventful fate. Much mischief was done with it. For example, one author, reporting on Hitler's years of misery in Vienna, placed a stiff bowler hat on the typical profile, stuck a swastika pin in the tie, and passed the picture off as a drawing from the later years in Vienna. The profile could be accepted if one knew how much Hitler's physiognomy had remained the same. But that author did not know that Hitler never wore a bowler hat. Adolf loved dark, soft hats, nothing else. How he mocked these "melons"!

With that, I am at the end of everything relating to the portraits of the young Hitler. I merely want to try to supplement with words a few things about the appearance of my childhood friend, although I am aware of the inadequacy of this attempt.

Hitler was of medium height and slender, even then somewhat taller than his mother. His figure did not seem strong at all, rather somewhat lanky and slight. He was not strong at all. His health was in a rather poor state, which he himself regretted most. He had to protect himself from the foggy and damp Linz climate during the winter months. In fact, he was occasionally indisposed at this time and coughed a lot. In a word, he was weak in the lungs.

The nose was very even and well-proportioned, by no means striking. The forehead was high and clear, slightly receding. It always pained me that even then he had the habit of combing his part as far as possible into his forehead. Moreover, this usual forehead-nose-mouth description seems very ridiculous to me; for in this countenance the eyes were something so predominant that one did not notice everything else at noticed. I have never again in my life seen a person in whom — how should I even express it? — the eyes so completely dominated the countenance as with my friend. They were the light eyes of his mother. But the somewhat fixed, piercing gaze was even more intensified in the son, heightened in a certain sense, and possessed even more power and expressiveness. It was uncanny how the expression of these eyes could change, especially when Adolf spoke. To me, however, his dark, sonorous voice meant much less in itself than the expression of his eyes. Adolf actually spoke with his eyes. Even when his mouth was silent, one knew what he wanted to say. When he came to our house for the first time and I introduced him to my mother, she said to me that evening before going to bed: "What eyes your friend has!" And I can remember very well that there was more alarm than admiration in her words. If I am occasionally asked in what way the unusual nature of this man was most clearly heralded during his youth, I can only give one answer: in the eyes!

Of course, his unusual oratorical gift was also striking. Yet I was still too inexperienced to attach any particular expectations to it. I was, after all, convinced that Hitler would one day become a great artist—a poet, I thought at first, then a significant painter, until he later convinced me in Vienna that his talent lay in the field of architecture. But for these artistic intentions, his oratorical gift was not necessary, indeed rather a hindrance. Nevertheless, I always enjoyed listening to him. His language was very refined. He rejected dialect, especially the Viennese, which in its soft, melodic way was inwardly repugnant to him. Actually, Hitler did not speak in the usual Austrian sense at all. Rather, one could say that in his way of speaking, especially in the rhythm of his speech, there was something Bavarian, specifically Lower Bavarian. Perhaps it had been decisive that he was in Passau from his third to his sixth year, the time of actual language acquisition, where his father was a customs official at the time.

Without a doubt, my friend Adolf was oratorically gifted from his earliest youth. He knew it, too. He spoke gladly and at length. Sometimes, when he lost himself too far in his fantasies, the suspicion arose in me that everything he said was merely a speaking exercise. But then again, I would dismiss this opinion. Had I not just myself taken everything he said literally as truth? Then again, Adolf would positively test his oratorical power of persuasion on me or others. An unforgettable example remained in my memory: how the barely eighteen-year-old convinced my father to release me from his business and send me to Vienna to study at the Conservatory.

must. Given my father's heavy and reserved nature, this was certainly an unusual achievement. Since that proof of his talent, which was so decisive for me, I no longer considered anything impossible with Hitler that could be achieved through a persuasive speech. He usually used to emphasize it with measured and deliberate gestures. Every now and then, when he spoke about one of his favorite topics—the Danube bridge, the expansion of the museum, or even the underground station he had planned for Linz—I would interrupt him and ask how he envisioned the practical realization of these projects, since we were nothing but poor devils! Then he would look at me so strangely and hostilely, as if he hadn't understood my question at all. I never received an answer to it either; at most, a very characteristic gesture of the hand cut me off. Later I got used to it and no longer found it at all ridiculous when the sixteen- or seventeen-year-old developed giant projects and presented them to me down to the last detail. If I had only stuck to his words, the whole thing would have seemed to me like an idle game or madness. But his eyes convinced me that he was serious.

Adolf thought very highly of good manners and an exact, clean form. With painful precision, he observed the commandments of social interaction, however little society itself meant to him. In his demeanor, he always emphasized the position of his father, who, as a customs official, had held roughly the rank of a captain. When he spoke of his "father," one did not suspect how vehemently he himself rejected any official position. Nevertheless, he had something very precise in his demeanor. He never forgot to ask me to give his regards to my parents; on no card, however fleeting, was the greeting to my "esteemed parents" missing!

In Vienna, when we lived together with a landlady, I discovered that he always carefully placed his long trousers under the mattress in the evening so that he could enjoy a flawless crease in the morning. Adolf knew how to appreciate the value of an advantageous outward appearance very much. Although he was not vain, he did possess a pronounced sense for self-presentation. Undoubtedly, he possessed great acting talent, which he knew how to use excellently, paired with his gift for oratory. I often wondered why Hitler had not progressed further in Vienna with these distinct abilities. Only later did I realize that he had not been concerned at all with rising professionally. He did not possess the slightest ambition to secure a bread-and-butter job. The people who met him in Vienna could not understand the contradiction between his well-groomed outward appearance, his well-chosen language, and his confident demeanor on the one hand, and the starvation existence he led on the other.

existed, they could not understand and considered him either arrogant or boastful. He was neither. He simply did not fit into any bourgeois mold.

At the same time, Hitler was a true artist at starving, although he gladly ate well when the opportunity arose. To be sure, he usually lacked the necessary money for this in Vienna. If he did have any, he was ready at any time to forgo food in order to be able to buy a ticket for a theater performance. What others call the enjoyment of life, he did not understand at all. He did not smoke, he did not drink; in Vienna, for example, he lived for days on end only on milk and bread.

Given his disdain for everything relating to the body, sport—which was then just beginning a powerful upswing—also meant little to him. Somewhere I once read how boldly the young Hitler had swum across the Danube. I cannot remember that. At most, we occasionally went bathing in the Rodl. But that was all. The Bicycle Club, which united enterprising cyclists, only interested him because this club maintained an ice rink in winter. But even this ice rink interested him less for the physical activity; it was about the girl he loved, who practiced the art of skating there.

The only sport that Hitler pursued with great zeal was walking. He walked everywhere and always. Even in the workshop or in my room, he constantly paced up and down. In memory, I always see him somehow in motion. He could walk for hours without tiring. We wandered far and wide through the extensive surroundings of Linz. There is probably no path that we both did not tread. His love for nature was very pronounced. However, he loved nature in a very personal way. Not that he felt compelled, as in other fields of knowledge, to carry out special studies. I hardly remember seeing him with scientific books. His otherwise insatiable thirst for knowledge seemed to have come to a clear limit here. To be sure, as he told me, he had once diligently studied botany during his school days and started a herbarium, but such activity, like starting a butterfly collection or collecting minerals, sprang more from his youthful zeal than from a special talent. It was not the individual elements in nature that interested him. Rather, he took nature as a whole. He called it the "Outdoors." This word sounded so familiar from his mouth, as if he had called it "Home." In fact, he felt at home in nature. His peculiar preference for nocturnal hikes or for staying overnight somewhere in an unfamiliar area was already to be observed during the first year of our friendship.

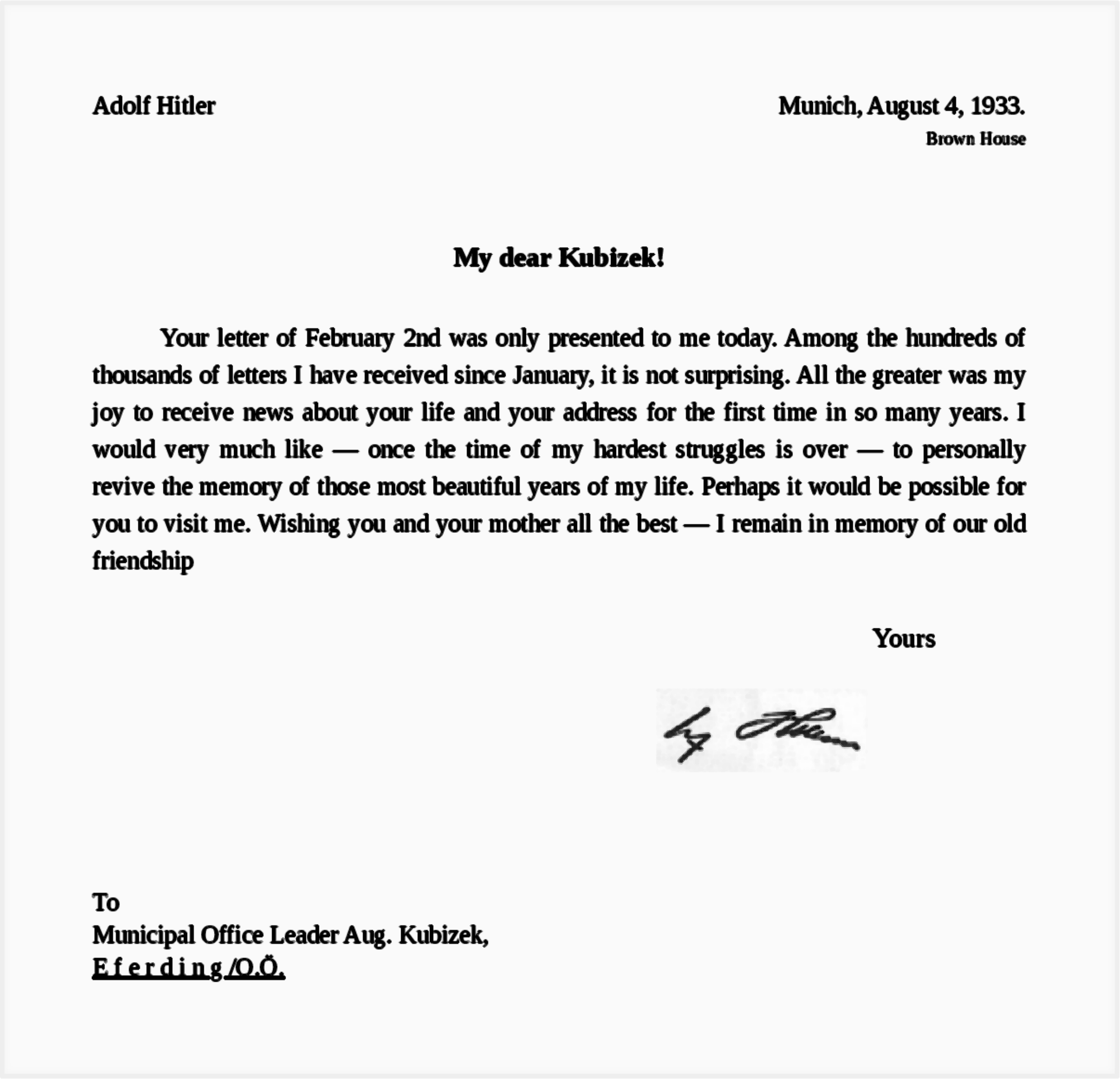
Nature exerted a quite extraordinary influence on him, such as I have never been able to observe in any other person. He was simply a completely different person "outside" than inside the city. There were certain sides of his being that only revealed themselves in nature at all. He was never so collected, so concentrated as on the quiet paths through the beech forests of the Mühlviertel or at night when we would quickly run up the Freinberg. In the rhythm of walking, his thoughts and ideas also flowed much more calmly and purposefully than elsewhere.

For a long time, I could not explain a peculiar contradiction in him. When the bright sun shone into the alleys and a fresh, invigorating wind carried the scent of the forests into the city, it drove him with irresistible power out of the narrow, stifling city toward meadows and forests. But hardly were we outside, he assured me that it was impossible for him to stay in the country any longer. It would be terrible for him to have to live in a village again, as Leonding was. For all his love of nature, he was happy every time we returned to the familiar city.

As I got to know Adolf better over time, this contradictoriness of his nature became understandable to me. He needed the city, the diversity and abundance of impressions, experiences, and events; for he felt involved in everything, there was nothing in the city that would not have occupied him. He needed people with their so contradictory interests, their endeavors, intentions, plans, wishes. Only in this atmosphere charged with problems did he feel at ease. From this point of view, the village was far too monotonous for him, too insignificant, too trivial, and therefore not productive enough for his irrepressible need to occupy himself with everything. Furthermore, a city was interesting to him in itself as an accumulation of structures and houses. Understandably, he only wanted to live in the midst of the city.

On the other hand, however, he needed an effective counterweight against this constantly pressing, occupying city, which demanded his talents and interests to the highest degree. He found it in nature, in which there was nothing for him to improve or change, because the eternally same laws that nature obeyed remained outside of human will. Here he could come back to himself again, because he did not find himself prompted to take a stand at every turn as he did in the city.

My friend had a very special way of making nature subservient to his being. He sought out a quiet place in the vicinity of the city, hardly visited by others, where he could be alone.



Adolf Hitler

Munich, August 4, 1933.
Brown House

My dear Kubizek!

Your letter of February 2nd was only presented to me today. Among the hundreds of thousands of letters I have received since January, it is not surprising. All the greater was my joy to receive news about your life and your address for the first time in so many years. I would very much like — once the time of my hardest struggles is over — to personally revive the memory of those most beautiful years of my life. Perhaps it would be possible for you to visit me. Wishing you and your mother all the best — I remain in memory of our old friendship

Yours

To
Municipal Office Leader Aug. Kubizek,
Eferding/O.Ö.

Adolf Hitler's letter to the author. In this letter, Hitler still uses the informal "Du" and calls the years spent with the author the most beautiful of his life.

August Kubizek. Above, a recent photograph; left, a picture from the years when he became friends with the then fifteen-year-old Hitler.

Time and again he went there; every bush, every tree was well known to him. Nothing was around him that could have torn him away from his contemplativeness. Nature surrounded him like the walls of a quiet, familiar chamber. Thus he had turned the "outside" into an "inside," where he could indulge undisturbed in his passionate plans and ideas.

For a long time, he had set up a natural study for himself in this way for beautiful days on a bench along the Turmleitenweg. There he read his books, there he drew and painted watercolors, and there his first poems were written. Another, later preferred spot was even more solitary and hidden. From the footpath that leads halfway up the Kalvarienberg into the Zaubertal, one had to branch off to the west and climb through bushes over large, dark stone slabs without any path or trail to reach this place, which no one else found. We sat down on the highest, somewhat overhanging rock. While bushes and trees in a dense semi-circle behind us closed off the world, the Danube lay freely beneath our feet. The sight of the quietly passing river always moved Adolf anew. Irresistibly, coming from the eternal, moving into the eternal, the mighty water pressed eastward. How often my friend told me of his plans up there. Occasionally it happened that the feeling overwhelmed him. Then he gave free rein to his imagination. I remember how he once described Kriemhild's procession to the land of the Huns so vividly from this spot that I believed I could see the mighty ships of the Burgundian kings drifting downstream.

In contrast to this contemplative retreat were our extensive hikes. In those days, one was quickly prepared. The only thing one needed was a sturdy walking stick. Adolf wore a colored shirt with his weekday suit, and as a sign that he intended to go on a long hike today, instead of the usual tie, he wore only a braided silk cord ending in two tassels. We took no provisions with us. Somewhere out there, if we were hungry, we would find a piece of dry bread and drink a glass of milk with it. What wonderfully carefree times those were!

We despised the train and carriages and went everywhere only on foot. When our Sunday hike was combined with an excursion by my parents—which had the advantage for us that we were invited by my father to a hearty midday meal in some country inn—we marched out early enough to be able to meet the parents, who followed by train, at the destination. My father, who was even more glad than I to be out after six days of work in sweat and...

To get pure air back into the lungs after the dust, he especially loved the small, idyllic village of Walding, which lies in the midst of magnificent orchards and, at blossom time, can hardly be seen from behind the white or pink shimmering treetops. Walding was so pleasant to us because the Rodelbach flows by nearby, where we liked to bathe on warm summer days. The stream with its dark golden bottom is already reminiscent of the quiet forest streams from Adalbert Stifter's homeland. But the Rodel is treacherous. Sometimes, exactly where one least expects it, deep pools form, from which only a capable swimmer can still emerge.

One small episode has remained in my memory. Adolf and I had run over from the inn to the stream to bathe. I was a reasonably good swimmer, as was my friend. But my mother had no peace of mind. She followed us and stood on a protruding granite block to watch us at our swimming skills. The rock, which sloped down towards the water, was covered with moss. The good mother, while watching us anxiously and worriedly, slipped on the slippery moss, fell, just as she stood, into the water and sank into the dark, eerie pool. I was too far away to be able to help immediately. But Adolf immediately jumped in after my mother and pulled her out of the water. Adolf always remained devoted to my parents. It is significant that as late as 1944 he had a food parcel sent to my mother for her eightieth birthday.

Adolf especially loved the Mühlviertel. The wide-sweeping heights, which made the view freer from hill to hill and finally, without reaching a proper summit, opened up the panorama all around, ignited his enthusiasm again and again. Down there, by the bright silver ribbon of the river, lay the city, tightly crowded together. Above the vast, fertile farmland, the Alpine peaks rose in the south, so clear on Foehn days that every single one of them could be precisely recognized. From the Pöstlingberg, which is not a mountain in the true sense of the word, but only the edge of the plateau sloping down to the Danube, we hiked via the Holzpoldl and the Elendsimmerl to Gramastetten or roamed through the forests around the Lichtenhag ruins. Adolf measured the masonry, which was only sparsely preserved, and entered the measurements obtained into the sketchbook that he constantly carried with him. Then, with a few strokes, he sketched the original castle layout, drew in the moat, the drawbridge, and decorated the walls from his free imagination with battlements and bay windows. Once he surprised me up there with the cry: "This is the ideal setting for my sonnet!" But when I wanted to learn more about it, he merely explained: "I must first see what becomes of it!" And on the way home he confessed to me that he wanted to try to...

material he was working on, into a play.

He ran out to St. Georgen an der Gusen to determine what memories still existed there of the famous battle in the Peasants' War. When we had roamed through the entire Riedmark without discovering the slightest clue, Adolf came up with a strange idea. He was convinced that a distant memory of this great battle must have remained alive in the people native to that area. The next day he went out alone, after having previously tried in vain to ask my father to excuse me for it. He stayed out for two days and two nights. What he learned there, I no longer know.

Only because Adolf wanted to see his beloved Linz from the east for once, I had to climb around with him on the unfriendly Pfennigberg, for which the people of Linz, as he complained, had far too little interest. I, too, liked the city better from every other side than from this one. Nevertheless, Adolf sat for hours on this inhospitable height and sketched. Even a visit to neighboring Steyregg could not compensate me for that day.

On the other hand, St. Florian also took on the significance of a place of pilgrimage of art for me. We believed that in these surroundings, hallowed by the work of Anton Bruckner, we might unexpectedly encounter the "Musician of God" and hear his brilliant improvisations on the great organ in the magnificent church. But then we stood before the simple gravestone set into the floor beneath the choir, where the great master had been laid to eternal rest a decade ago. The wonderful monastery, a magnificent building by Jakob Prandtauer, inflamed my friend to the highest enthusiasm. Then he stood for an hour or longer—much too long for me—before the magnificent Prelates' Staircase; how he admired the display of splendor in the library. But the strongest impression was left on him by the contrast that the overloaded rooms and halls of the monastery formed with the simple Bruckner room. When he saw this simple furniture, the inkling was strengthened in him that on this earth, brilliant creative power is almost always associated with hardship and poverty.

For me, such visits were very revealing; for Adolf was, fundamentally, a reserved nature. He always had a certain area of his being into which he allowed no one to penetrate. There were always unfathomable secrets with him, and in many ways my friend remained a mystery to me forever. But there was a key that did unlock much that otherwise remained hidden: the enthusiasm for beauty. When we stood before such a magnificent work of art as the St. Florian Monastery, everything that separated us fell away. Then Adolf could go completely out of himself in the fire of enthusiasm, and I felt the happiness of this...

friendship twice as great.

I have often been asked, I believe even by Rudolf Hess when he once invited me to see him in Linz, whether Hitler, as I remember him, actually had a sense of humor. People in his circle explained that they missed this in him. After all, he was an Austrian, so he must have had something of that so famous Austrian humor.

Certainly, the impression one got of Hitler, especially during a brief and fleeting encounter, was that of a deeply serious man. This immense seriousness seemed to overshadow everything else. It was no different in his younger years. With a downright deadly seriousness, which did not seem to fit a sixteen- or seventeen-year-old at all, he tackled the questions that moved him. And the world had thousands upon thousands of questions for him. He could love and admire, hate and despise, all with the greatest seriousness. But to set a matter aside with a smile, that he could not do. Even if he was not personally interested in something, such as sports, as a phenomenon of the times, sports were just as important to him as all other problems. He never reached an end in these continuous debates. His profound seriousness always attacked new questions, and if the present provided him with no material, he would brood at home for hours over books and dig into the questions of the past. This unusual seriousness was his most striking outward characteristic. In exchange, much was absent that otherwise characterizes youth at this age: a carefree letting-go, living for the day with the happy thought "come what may," or even kicking over the traces, a coarse boisterousness! No, that never existed with him. He would have felt—a strange contradiction—very un-youthful in doing so. Humor, however, was thereby banished to the most private sphere. It only flashed through now and then, as if it were something frowned upon. Mostly, this humor was aimed at people in his immediate surroundings, that is, at an area where there were no more questions or problems for him. Therefore, mockery often mixed into his dogged and somewhat grim humor, though it was a thoroughly friendly intended mockery. For instance, he once saw me in a concert as I was blowing the trumpet. It gave him immense pleasure to imitate me, and he claimed that with my puffed-out cheeks I had looked like an angel by Rubens.

I cannot close this chapter without mentioning a quality of the young Hitler which to point out today—I admit this readily—sounds almost paradoxical. Hitler was possessed of a deep power of empathy and participation fulfilled. In a truly touching way, he took an interest in my fate. I did not even need to tell him how things stood with me. He felt everything that moved me as directly as if it had happened to himself. How often he helped me in difficult situations because of this. He always knew what I needed and what was necessary for me. As intensely as he was occupied with himself, he also dealt just as intensely with the affairs of people who interested him. It was by no means a coincidence that it was he who gave my life its decisive direction by prevailing upon my father to let me study music. Rather, this came from a general fundamental attitude that allowed him to participate quite naturally in everything that concerned me. I sometimes had the feeling as if, alongside his own life, he was also living mine with me.

Thus, I have drawn the picture of the young Hitler as well as I am able from my memory. But the question that stood unconsciously and unspoken over this youthful friendship at that time remains unanswered for me even today: What did God intend with this man?

THE MOTHER'S PORTRAIT

There is only one, but this one makes all other pictures superfluous, for it expresses the essence of this quiet, modest woman, whom I revered, better than a whole dozen indifferent photographs. We see before us the image of a young woman with strikingly regular facial features. Yet there is already a secret trace of suffering around this tightly closed mouth, for which a smile comes with difficulty. The bright, somewhat staring eyes completely dominate the serious face.

Klara Hitler was already 45 years old at the time I gained access to her family, having been a widow for two years. Her features, however, compared to that photographic record, had essentially not changed much. Only now, suffering spoke even more clearly from them, and her hair had turned gray. But Klara Hitler remained a beautiful woman until her early death. Suffering transfigured this beauty even more. Whenever I stood before her, I always felt, I don't know why, pity and had the need to do something good for her. She was happy that Adolf had found a friend with whom he got along well and in whom he could completely confide. Frau Hitler was therefore very fond of me. How often she spoke to me from her heart about the worries that Adolf caused her! How she hoped to have found a helper in me to bring her son onto the path desired by his father! I had to disappoint her. But she did not hold it against me; for she probably sensed that the causes for Adolf's behavior lay much deeper and remained entirely outside my sphere of influence.

Soon each of us had gained a foothold in the other's family. Just as Adolf was often a guest at our home and felt comfortable with my parents, I was often at his mother's, and Frau Hitler never failed to invite me for a new visit when I took my leave. I felt as if I belonged to the family; for there was hardly anyone else who frequented the place.

Often, when I finished work in the workshop earlier than I had thought, I washed quickly, changed my clothes, and ran to Humboldtstraße. House number 31 is a three-story, not exactly unattractive apartment building. The Hitler family lived on the third floor. I hurried up the stairs. I rang the bell. Frau Hitler opened and greeted me kindly.

This heartfelt kindness seemed to brighten a little the quietly borne suffering that otherwise spoke from her features. I rejoiced at every smile on this serious countenance.

I can still see the simple apartment clearly before me. The small kitchen with the green-painted furniture had only one window, which faced the courtyard side. The living room with the two beds, in which the mother and little Paula slept, faced the street side. On the side wall hung the picture of the father, an impressive official's face, conscious of its dignity, whose somewhat grim expression was softened by the carefully maintained imperial beard. In the small room (Kabinett), which was accessible from the bedroom, Adolf slept and studied.

Paula, Adolf's little sister, was nine years old at the time I came into the Hitler family. She was a quiet, very withdrawn girl, pretty, yet not at all like her mother and also not like Adolf. I rarely saw her happy. Otherwise, we liked each other well enough. Adolf, however, did not care very much for his sister. This was primarily due to the age difference, which completely excluded Paula from his sphere of experience. He called her "the little one." Paula remained unmarried.

Furthermore, in the Hitler family, I met a woman in her early twenties, very stately and recently married, named Angela, whom I was not immediately able to place in the family history, although she said "Mother" to Klara Hitler just as little Paula did. This confused me greatly, and only later did I learn the solution to the riddle. Angela, born on July 28, 1883, was thus six years older than Adolf and came from the father's earlier marriage. Her real mother, Franziska Matzelsberger, had died the year after her birth. Five months later, the father had married again, this time to Klara Pölzl. Angela, who naturally had no memory of her actual mother, regarded Klara as her mother. In September 1903, a year before I became acquainted with Adolf, Angela had married the tax official Raubal. She lived with her husband very nearby, namely in the "Zum Waldhorn" inn on Bürgerstraße. But she came over to her stepmother very often, though she never brought her husband with her. In any case, I never met Raubal. In complete contrast to Mrs. Hitler, Angela was a cheerful, fun-loving person who liked to laugh. She really brought life into the family. With her symmetrical face and beautiful hair braided into long plaits, which was just as dark as Adolf's, she was an extraordinarily handsome figure. From Adolf's description, but also from what his mother told me in confidence, I learned that Raubal was a drinker. Adolf hated him. In Raubal, everything he despised in a man was united. He always sat...

in the tavern, drank and smoked, gambled away his money and besides — he was a civil servant. To all other misfortunes, he felt obliged to represent the opinion of his father-in-law and pressured Adolf to likewise become a civil servant. That was all it took to make him an enemy for good. When Adolf spoke of Raubal, his face took on a very specific threatening expression. Perhaps this pronounced hatred that Adolf harbored against his half-sister's husband was the reason why Raubal was so rarely seen on Humboldtstrasse. When Raubal died a few years after the marriage to Angela, the connection between him and Adolf had long since been completely severed. Angela, however, later married a Dresden architect as a widow. I still possess a postcard greeting from Bayreuth from her. She died in Munich in 1949.

From Adolf I learned that from his father's second marriage there was also a son, Alois, who had likewise spent his childhood in the Hitler family, but had already moved away during their stay in Lambach. This half-brother of Adolf — born on December 13, 1881, in Braunau — was seven years older than Adolf. As Adolf told it, he had come to Leonding a few times while the father was still alive. To my knowledge, he no longer appeared on Humboldtstrasse. In Hitler's life, this half-brother Alois never played a decisive role. Conversely, he did not concern himself with Adolf's political career either. He turned up once in Paris, then in Vienna, then in Berlin. From the first marriage of this half-brother of Adolf to a Dutch woman comes that William Patrick Hitler, who in August 1939 published a writing: "Mon oncle Adolphe," while his son from the second marriage, Heinz Hitler, fell as an officer in the East.

With these details about the Hitler family, I only reach beyond my own experiences as far as is necessary for completeness and as I was granted insight into the relevant documents.

Although Mrs. Hitler spoke only reluctantly about herself and her worries, she felt relieved when she could voice her concerns about Adolf to me. The vague statements, meaningless to the mother, which Adolf made about his future as an artist, could understandably not satisfy her. The concern for the welfare of her only surviving son increasingly darkened her disposition. How often I sat together with her and Adolf in the small kitchen. "Our good father has no peace in his grave," she used to say to Adolf, "because you absolutely do not act according to his will. Obedience is the foundation for a good son. But you have no obedience. That is why you have not progressed in school and have no luck in life."

Gradually I began to understand more and more the suffering that lay over the nature of this woman. She never complained about her fate. However, she did tell me about her hard youth.

Thus, partly through personal experiences and partly through communications from family members, I became familiar with the circumstances of the Hitler family. Occasionally, relatives in the Waldviertel were also mentioned. It was difficult for me to distinguish whether these were maternal or paternal relatives. In any case, for the Hitler family, there were relatives only in the Waldviertel, a significant difference from other Austrian civil servant families, who often had relatives in several crown lands. It was only later that I realized that Hitler's paternal and maternal lines already merged in the second generation, so that for him, from his grandfather onwards, there was actually only a single clan. I remember that Adolf traveled to see his relatives in the Waldviertel. Once he also wrote me a postcard from Weitra, which lies in the highest part of the Waldviertel facing Bohemia. What led him there specifically, I no longer know. He also did not particularly like to talk about his relatives up there and instead described the area itself to me in detail: a poor, barren land. This rough, hard peasant land was the home of his maternal and paternal ancestors.

The biographical data of Mrs. Klara Hitler, née Pölzl, are clearly documented. She was born on August 12, 1860, in Spital, a poor Waldviertel community. Her father, Johann Baptist Pölzl, was a simple farmer; her mother, Johanna Pölzl, was née Hüttler. The spelling of the name Hitler fluctuates in the individual documents. One finds both the spelling Hiedler and Hüttler, while the spelling Hitler only appears with Adolf's father. This Johanna Hüttler, Adolf's maternal grandmother, was demonstrably a daughter of Johann Nepomuk Hiedler. Thus, Klara Pölzl was directly related to the Hüttler-Hiedler clan. Johann Nepomuk Hiedler was, in fact, the brother of Johann Georg Hiedler, who appears entered in the baptismal register at Döllersheim as the father of Adolf's father. Klara Pölzl was therefore a second cousin of her husband. Alois Hitler also referred to her, as long as she was not his wife, simply as his niece.

Klara Pölzl spent a meager youth in the impoverished, child-rich household. I heard about her siblings several times. Klara was one of the youngest among the twelve children. There was often talk of Johanna, a sister of Klara. This Aunt Johanna also looked after Adolf several times after he had become a double orphan. I later met another of Klara's sisters, Amalia.

In the year 1879, when Klara Pölzl was fifteen years old, her relative, the customs official Alois Schicklgruber in Braunau, called her to him so that she might assist his wife in the household. Alois Schicklgruber, who only in the following year took the name Hiedler, which he changed to Hitler, was at that time married to Mrs. Anna Glasl-Hörer. This first marriage of Alois Hitler to the woman fourteen years his senior remained childless and was eventually separated. When his wife died in 1883, Alois Hitler married Franziska Matzelsberger, a woman who was twenty-four years younger than he. From this marriage come the two half-siblings of Adolf, Alois and Angela. Klara had worked in the household during Alois Hitler's first, partially separated marriage. After the second marriage, however, she left her relative's house and went to Vienna. However, when Franziska, Alois Hitler's second wife, fell seriously ill shortly after the birth of the second child, Alois Hitler called his niece back to Braunau. Franziska died on August 10, 1884, after barely two years of marriage. (Alois, the first child from this marriage, was born out of wedlock and had been adopted by his father.) On January 7, 1885, thus half a year after the death of his second wife, Alois Hitler married his niece Klara, who was already expecting a child by him, the first son Gustav, who was born on May 17, 1885, thus after barely five months of marriage, and died in early childhood on December 9, 1887.

Even though Klara Pölzl was only a niece of the second degree, the two betrothed nevertheless required a church dispensation in order to be able to marry. This petition, in the clean calligraphic handwriting of the k. u. k. (Imperial and Royal) civil servant, still lies today in the episcopal ordinariate in Linz under the file number 6. 911/II/2 1884. This document has the following wording:

Application of Alois Hitler and his bride Klara Pölzl for marriage permission.

Honorable Episcopal Ordinariate!

The undersigned, in deepest reverence, are determined to marry. However, according to the enclosed family tree, the canonical impediment of collateral relationship in the third degree touching the second stands in their way. Therefore, they submit the humble request that the honorable Ordinariate might graciously obtain the dispensation for them, specifically for the following reasons:

The groom, according to the death certificate, has been a widower since August 10 of this year and is the father of two minor children, a boy of two and a half years (Alois) and a girl of one year and two months (Angela), for whom he necessarily requires a caregiver, all the more so as he, as a customs official, is away from home all day, often also at night, and therefore can only slightly supervise the upbringing and care of the children. The bride has already taken over the care of the children after the death of the mother taken over and are very fond of her, so that it can be reasonably assumed that her upbringing would flourish and the marriage would be a happy one. Moreover, the bride has no fortune and therefore might not so easily be offered another opportunity for a respectable marriage.

Based on these reasons, the undersigned repeat their humble request for the gracious granting of the dispensation from the aforementioned impediment of kinship.

Braunau, October 27, 1884

Alois Hitler, Groom
Klara Pölzl, Bride

The family tree, which was attached to the request for dispensation, shows the following arrangement:

Johann Georg Hiedler — Johann Nepomuk Hiedler
|
Alois Hitler

Johann Nepomuk Hiedler
|
Johanna Hiedler
married Pölzl
|
Klara Pölzl

The episcopal ordinariate in Linz declared that it was not authorized to grant this dispensation and forwarded the request to Rome, from where it was approved by a papal *parere* (opinion).

The marriage of Alois Hitler to Klara is described as thoroughly happy by various acquaintances who socialized with the family in Braunau, Passau, Hafeld, Lambach, and Leonding, which can probably only be attributed to the woman's docile and adaptable nature. She once said something like this to me about it: "What one hopes and dreams of as a young girl regarding marriage, my marriage did not become." And then she added resignedly: "But where does that ever happen?"

Added to this was the heavy mental and physical burden on this delicate woman caused by the children born in rapid succession: still in the year of the marriage, 1885, the son Gustav was born; in 1886, a daughter Ida, who likewise died after two years; in 1887, again a son Otto, who passed away three days after birth; on April 20, 1889, yet another son, Adolf.

How much silently borne maternal suffering speaks from these sober details! When Adolf was born, his three siblings, Gustav, Ida, and Otto, were already dead. With what anxiety must the heavily tested mother have guarded the life of her fourth child? Once she told me that Adolf was a very

...had been a sickly child, so that she had always lived in the constant worry of losing him as well. I could empathize with her, as my own mother had also lost three of her children to early death, and I was the anxiously cared-for fourth.

Perhaps the fact that three children of this marriage died in early childhood was due to the circumstance that Alois Hitler's third marriage was a consanguineous one. I leave the judgment of that to more qualified men. However, I would like to point out one circumstance in this connection to which, in my opinion, the greatest attention should be paid.

The most striking characteristic in the personality of my childhood friend was, according to my personal experience, the unheard-of consistency in everything he said and everything he did. Something firm, rigid, immovable, stubbornly fixed, which manifested itself outwardly in an uncanny seriousness, lay in his nature and literally formed the basis upon which all other character traits developed. Adolf simply could not "get out of his own skin," as we say. Whatever lay within these fixed areas of his being remained unchanged forever. How often I experienced this with him! A word comes to mind that he said to me when we saw each other again in 1938, after thirty years: "You haven't changed, Kubizek, only older!" This word was meant to apply to me. But in truth, it applied a hundred times more to himself. He never became different.

I have sought an explanation for this so typical fundamental trait of his nature. Environmental influences and upbringing carry little weight here. However, I could imagine—although a complete layman in matters of hereditary biology—that through a special constellation of the hereditary process in this consanguineous marriage, certain areas were fixed, and these "arrested complexes" produced that typical character profile. Fundamentally, it was precisely this "inability to be otherwise" that was the reason why Adolf Hitler caused his mother such unheard-of worries.

Once again, the mother's heart was severely tested by fate. Five years after Adolf's birth, on March 24, 1894, the mother had given birth to a fifth child, a son named Edmund, who likewise died at a young age on June 29, 1900, in Leonding. While Adolf naturally had no memory of the three siblings who died in Braunau and never spoke of them, he could clearly remember his brother Edmund, at whose death he was already eleven years old. He once told me that Edmund had died of diphtheria. On the other hand, the youngest child, a girl named Paula, born on January 21, 1896, remained alive.

Of her six children, Klara Hitler had thus lost four to early death. The mother's heart may have been broken under these terrible trials. Only one thing remained: the concern for the two children still living, a concern she had to bear alone after the death of her husband. It was a small consolation that Paula was a quiet, easy-to-lead child. All the greater was the concern for her only son, Adolf, a concern that only ended with her death.

Adolf loved his mother very much. I can testify to this before God and the world. Throughout all that time, I remember many signs and occasions on which he expressed this love for his mother, most deeply, indeed truly movingly, during the time of her fatal illness. Not once did he speak of his mother other than with deep love. He was a good son. That he could not fulfill her most ardent wish—to strive for a secure position in life—lay outside of his personal will.

When we lived together in Vienna, he always carried his mother's picture in a locket with him. In his book "Mein Kampf," however, stands the significant sentence: "I had honored my father, but loved my mother."

MEMORIES OF THE FATHER

Unfortunately, I no longer knew him personally. But the effect of his personality could still be felt down to the smallest detail. Although he had already been dead for almost two years when I met Adolf, he remained "ever-present" to his relatives. The mother was completely absorbed in his being. In her quiet, affectionate way, she had almost completely lost her own identity; what she thought, said, and did happened in the spirit of the deceased father. But in order to continue to enforce the father's will, she lacked his drive and energy. For her, the all-forgiving mother, the boundless love that filled her whole life stood in the way of her son's upbringing. From these experiences, I could gauge how complete and lasting the influence of this man on his family must have been. A patriarchal head of the household, whose absolute authority was taken for granted. Now his picture hung in the best place in the room. On the shelf in the kitchen, I remember it exactly, stood the long pipes that the father had smoked, carefully lined up with brightly painted heads, just as if at the next moment the door could open and the Senior Customs Office Official would step in, returning home somewhat grumpily from duty, just to take one of the pipes from the shelf after a brief greeting. These pipes were literally the symbol of the father's omnipotence in the family. I remember how Mrs. Klara, many a time when the father was mentioned in conversation, would point to these pipes to give weight to her words, as if she could thereby obtain confirmation of how correctly she continued to represent his views.

Adolf spoke of his father with great respect. As vehemently as he resisted his opinion of becoming a civil servant, I never heard an improper word about the father. Indeed, the respect and veneration that Adolf showed him increased over the years. He did not resent the fact that the father, completely autocratic and authoritarian, had determined his son's future path in life and had destined Adolf to be a state official; for the father had the right, even the duty, to do so. It was a different matter when Raubal, the husband of his half-sister, this uneducated man who was after all only a minor tax official, presumed this right. Towards him, he forbade...

Adolf [resented] any interference in his personal affairs. The father's authority, however, as during his lifetime, continued to be the counterforce for Adolf long after his death, against which he developed his own strengths. He had grown up in constant conflict with this counterforce. The father's attitude had led him first to secret, then to open rebellion. There had been violent scenes which, as Adolf told me, often ended with the father beating him. Yet Adolf countered this violence with his youthful defiance. Thus, the contrast between father and son had become increasingly sharp. This peculiar, contradictory relationship of the son to the father—composed in equal parts of veneration and defiance, attachment and resistance, inseparable bonding and a stubborn desire to break free—formed the fundamental direction in Adolf's life.

The customs official Alois Hitler possessed a pronounced sense of representation throughout his life. We therefore have good pictures of him from various stages of his life. Alois Hitler had his photograph taken less at his weddings, which were always under an unlucky star, than at the time of official promotions. Most pictures show him with a dignified official face in a parade uniform with white trousers and a dark coat, on which the polished buttons shine in a double row. A narrow sash encircles the stately, medium-sized figure, which was slightly inclined toward stoutness. The face of this man is impressive. A broad, massive head, on which the sideburns shaved at the chin—as worn by his supreme master, the Emperor—are particularly striking! The eyes look sharp and incorruptible. One can tell from this gaze that this man, as a customs official, was obliged to meet everything he encountered with suspicion. Yet in most pictures, official dignity masks the "investigative" nature of the gaze. Even in the pictures showing Alois Hitler already in retirement, it becomes visible that this capable, energetic man in truth knew no retirement. Although he had already passed his sixtieth year, the typical signs of age were missing. One of these pictures, presumably the last, which can also be seen on the parents' grave in Leonding, still shows Alois Hitler as a man whose life was shaped by service and fulfillment of duty. However, there is a second, somewhat younger photograph from the Leonding period that reflects Alois Hitler more from his private side; the image of a comfortable, wealthy citizen who knows how to live well.

Alois Hitler's rise from the illegitimate son of a poor stable maid to a respected and esteemed state official is the path from the insignificance of a socially forgotten class to what was then for him the highest possible position in the civil service.

First, let us hear what Hitler himself writes in his book about his father's path in life:

> "As the son of a poor, small crofter, he could not stand it at home even then. Before he was even thirteen years old, the little boy of that time packed his knapsack and ran away from his homeland, the Waldviertel. Despite the advice of 'experienced' villagers, he had wandered to Vienna to learn a trade there. That was in the fifties of the last century. A bitter decision to set out on the road like that with three guilders for travel provisions, into the unknown. But by the time the thirteen-year-old had turned seventeen, he had passed his journeyman's examination, yet had not gained satisfaction. Rather the opposite. The long period of hardship at that time, of eternal misery and woe, strengthened the resolve to give up the trade after all, in order to become something 'higher.' If once the village priest appeared to the poor boy as the epitome of all humanly attainable heights, now, in the big city which vastly expanded his horizon, it was the dignity of a state official. With all the tenacity of one who had become 'old' through hardship and grief even in mid-childhood, the seventeen-year-old obsessed over his new resolve — and became an official. After almost twenty-three years, I believe, the goal was reached. Now the prerequisite for his vow also seemed fulfilled, which the poor boy had once promised himself, namely not to return to his beloved paternal village until he had become something."

The career of this Alois Schicklgruber, who later had his name changed to Hitler, is the normal career of a dutiful official.

In 1864, the customs guard inspector Alois Schicklgruber was appointed provisional office assistant for the customs service. In 1892, the promotion of customs office official Alois Hitler to provisional senior customs office official took place. In 1894, Alois Hitler was transferred to the provincial capital of Linz as a permanent senior customs office official. Shortly thereafter, Alois Hitler applied for his retirement, which was granted to him by decree on June 25, 1895. He was 58 years old at the time and could look back on nearly forty years of uninterrupted service.

His colleagues from the customs service describe him as a very precise, conscientious official who was strict in service and had "his quirks." As a superior, Alois Hitler was not exactly popular. Outside of service, he is described as a very free-thinking man who made no secret of his convictions. Alois Hitler was very proud of his official rank. With bureaucratic punctuality, he appeared in Leonding every morning for a morning pint. At the evening citizens' table, he was a popular

State: Upper Austria, Diocese: Linz
Pol. District: BRAUNAU am INN
Local Parish: BRAUNAU am INN

Z. 290

Land Registry for the Parish
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BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE

and Birth Certificate

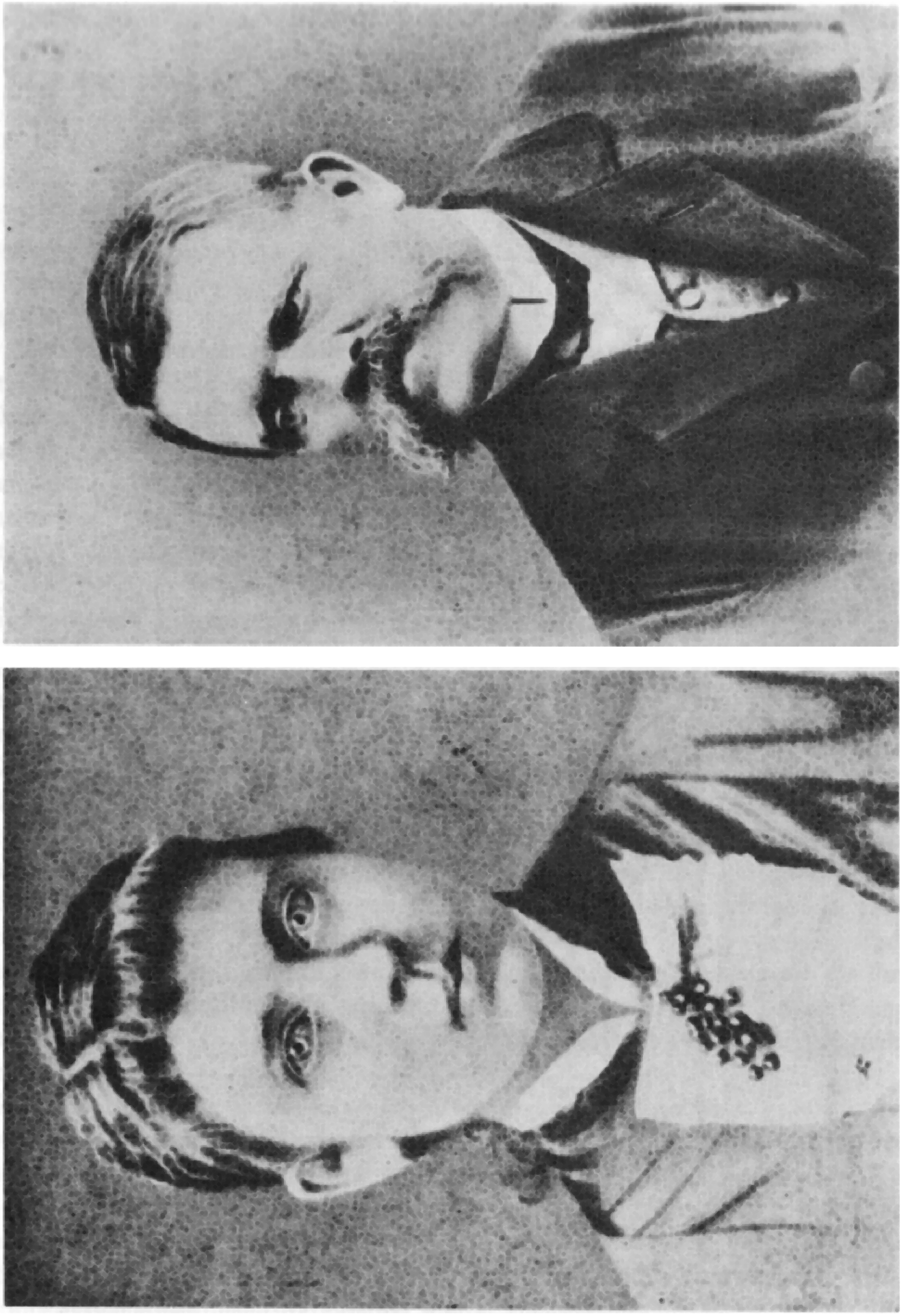
From the Birth and Baptismal Register of the Parish Braunau am Inn Vol. XIX Fol. 107 it is officially certified that in the year one thousand eight hundred eighty-nine (1889) on the 20th April at 6:30 PM the following child was born and by Rev. Ignaz Probst on the 22nd April 1889 was baptized according to the Roman Catholic rite:

Name of the Baptized	**Birth**		**Father** Name, Religion, Occupation, Residence, Legitimacy	**Mother** Name, Religion, Occupation, Residence, Parents, Legitimacy	**Godparents**		**Remarks**
	Place	**Date**			**Name, Occupation, Residence**	**Date**	
Adolfus	Vorstadt 219 House No.	20 April 1889	Alois Hitler, k.k. Customs Official.	Klara, daughter of Johann Baptist Pölzl and Johanna née Hitler, farmers in Spital, legitimate daughter.	Johann and Johanna Prinz, farmers in Vienna.	22 April 1889	Midwife: Franziska Danzer in Braunau

(L. S.)

In witness whereof the parish seal is affixed.
Parish Office: Braunau am Inn, on 12 November 1938
J. R. Pfanzelt, Provost

Baptismal and birth certificate of Adolf Hitler. From the entries regarding the child's mother, Klara Hitler, it is evident that her mother Johanna had also been named Hitler before her marriage. Klara Hitler was a close relative of her husband.



The parents of Adolf Hitler. Striking is Hitler's outward resemblance to his mother. In terms of character, however, he bore many of his father's traits.

companion, but could easily flare up and then become coarse, whereby innate vehemence and the strictness acquired in service combined. Thus, the father's external circumstances appear clear in themselves, a civil service career like a thousand others. Nothing unusual speaks from it.

But this life of the k. u. k. (Imperial and Royal) Senior Customs Official Alois Hitler, so strictly regulated by service, yields a somewhat different picture when viewed from the private side. The description of the father given in "Mein Kampf" requires, in order to be correct and complete, a supplement based on authentic documents. One must not forget that Adolf Hitler conceived his book "Mein Kampf," as the subtitle of the first volume states, as "a reckoning," naturally in a political sense. His biographical details were merely intended to provide a certain framework for this. But it was by no means his intention to write an autobiography. He said only as much about himself as seemed good and useful to him with regard to the political purpose of the book. He therefore understandably concealed that he did not come from his father's first, but from his third marriage, that his mother was a second cousin of his father, so he came from a consanguineous marriage, that he was not the first, but the fourth child of his parents, and that of five siblings, four died in childhood. The image of the father is also presented incompletely. Above all, one irrefutable fact is omitted: His father, Alois Hitler, was an illegitimate child.

The information regarding the father's illegitimate origin is clearly documented by the entries in the parish register of the Strones community. According to this, the forty-two-year-old domestic servant Anna Maria Schicklgruber gave birth to a child on July 7, 1837, a son who received the name "Alois" at baptism. The godfather was the employer, the farmer Johann Trummelschlager in Strones. The child was, as far as is known, the first and remained the only one. Regarding the child's father, the servant gave no information to the priest.

In the year 1842, when the illegitimate son was already five years old, Anna Maria Schicklgruber married the fifty-year-old miller's apprentice Johann Georg Hiedler. The following addition was appended to the ecclesiastical banns in the parish register of Döllersheim:

> "That the Georg Johann Hiedler entered as the father, who is well known to the undersigned witnesses, has acknowledged himself as the father of the child Alois as stated by the child's mother Anna Maria Schicklgruber, and has requested the entry of his name in the local baptismal register, is confirmed by the undersigned." There follow the signatures of the priest and the four locally known witnesses.

For a second time, Johann Georg Hiedler, on the occasion of a...

inheritance matter, he officially recorded his paternity in 1876 at the notary's office in Weitra. At that time, he was already eighty-four years old, the child's mother had been dead for nearly thirty years, and Alois Schicklgruber had long been a well-established customs assistant in Braunau. The farmers Rameder, Perutsch, and Breiteneder signed this document as locally known witnesses.

Thus, the question of paternity is sufficiently clarified according to ecclesiastical and official views. There is nothing more to be said about it. Absolute certainty cannot, of course, be achieved, so other combinations regarding Adolf Hitler's paternal grandfather are possible. Later exposé literature made ample use of this. But who, at that time, cared about the illegitimate child of a poor stable maid in a remote village of the Waldviertel?

Since the boy was not officially adopted even after the marriage of the child's mother, he continued to be named Schicklgruber. He would have kept this name for life if Johann Nepomuk Hiedler, the brother of Johann Georg who was fifteen years younger, had not made his will and, in doing so, wished to consider his brother's illegitimate son with a modest share. However, he set a condition that Alois must adopt the name Hiedler. In fact, on June 4, 1876, the name Alois Schicklgruber was changed to Alois Hiedler in the parish register of the Döllersheim parish office. On January 6, 1877, the Mistelbach district authority confirmed this change of name. Alois Schicklgruber now called himself Alois Hitler, a name that in itself meant as little as the other, but secured him an inheritance.

Adolf later told me about the name change his father had carried out when we happened to talk about his relatives in the Waldviertel. No measure taken by his "old man" satisfied him as completely as this one; for "Schicklgruber" seemed to him so coarse, too peasant-like, and moreover too cumbersome, impractical. "Hiedler" was too boring for him, too soft. But "Hitler" sounded good and was easy to remember.

That the father did not choose the spelling "Hiedler" common among his relatives, but completely freely invented the form "Hitler," which actually, like Hüttler, should be written with a double t, is typical of a particular quirk in him: the urge to constantly change. His superior authority was certainly not to blame for this. During his forty-year service, Alois Hitler was transferred only four times. The places where he had to perform his duties—Saalfelden, Braunau, Passau, and Linz—are geographically so favorable that they represent the ideal career path for a customs official. But hardly had Alois Hitler set foot in one of these places resolved, he began to relocate. For the years spent in Braunau, twelve relocations are documented; there were likely more. In Passau, he changed apartments three times in two years. From Linz, he moved immediately after retirement to Hafeld, from there to Lambach — first to the Leingartner Inn, then to the Schmiedmühle on the Schweigbach, thus changing residences twice in one year — then to Leonding. One cannot say that this constant change of residence — Adolf alone, when we met, remembered seven moves and had attended five different schools — was based on poor living conditions. Certainly, the Pommer Inn — Alois Hitler had a preference for living in inns! — in which Adolf was born in 1889, was one of the most beautiful and representative houses of the Braunau suburb. Nevertheless, the father moved out shortly after Adolf's birth. It is demonstrable that Alois Hitler often exchanged a poor apartment for a better one. Not the apartment, but the moving itself was the main thing. How is one to explain this strange addiction?

One could describe it this way: Alois Hitler could not bear to stay in one place. Even if his service forced a certain external stability upon him, there always had to be movement in his own sphere. Scarcely had he become accustomed to a certain environment than he was already weary of it. To live means to change circumstances, a fundamental trait that I also came to know very clearly in Adolf's nature.

Three times Alois Hitler changed his family circumstances. One could say that external circumstances were to blame for this. If that is so, fate accommodated his temperament in a rare way. Yet we know how especially the first wife, Anna, had to suffer under his instability, a circumstance that led to the separation from her husband and contributed much to her unexpected death; for Alois Hitler already had a child by his later second wife during the lifetime of his first wife. And even when the second wife became seriously ill and died, Klara, the third wife, was already expecting a child by him. The period until the wedding was just enough for the child to be born legitimately. Alois Hitler did not make life easy for his wives. More than what Frau Hitler hinted at in the most reserved manner, her haggard face spoke of it. Perhaps the circumstance that Alois Hitler never entered into a marriage that was harmonious in terms of age also contributed to this inner imbalance of the father. Anna was fourteen years older than he, Franziska about twenty-four, Klara about twenty-three years younger.

The unusual and strange peculiarity of the father, to repeatedly change the circumstances around him, is all the more striking as it falls into a time of calm, cozy civic peace, in which, seen from the outside, there were no reasons for such a change. This peculiarity, so typical of the father, also explains to me the strange behavior of his son, which had remained a mystery to me for so long because I could not explain his constant restlessness. When Adolf and I walked through the familiar alleys of the old bourgeois town — everything around us breathed peace, quiet, balance — my friend, when a certain mood had seized him, began to change everything he saw around him. This house stood in the wrong place. It should be torn down. Instead, a gap in the buildings could be closed there. But that street required an uncompromising correction so that a cohesive impression would be created. Away with this hideous, completely botched tenement block! A clear view to the old castle. In this way, he was constantly rebuilding this city. But it was not just about building. The beggar who stood in front of the church and asked for alms gave him cause to speak about a necessary state old-age pension system, through which street begging would become superfluous. A peasant woman came along with her milk cart, which a shaggy Saint Bernard was panting to pull forward — an occasion to criticize the lack of initiative of the animal welfare society. Two young lieutenants stroll through the alley with clinking sabers — reason enough to get worked up about the inadequacies of military service, which made this idleness possible. This tendency to be dissatisfied with everything existing, to constantly change it, to improve it, was ineradicably rooted in him. This was not a quality that he had acquired from the outside, perhaps through domestic upbringing or at school, but an original disposition that, in my opinion, was already expressed in the father's unsteady character. Like a motor that drives a thousand wheels, this uncanny power was within him. Nevertheless, in the effect of this disposition, there is a significant difference between the father and the son. The father possessed a reliably functioning regulator to curb his unruly temperament: the service. The strictly regulated official activity gave Alois Hitler's unsteady nature stability and direction. Time and again he rescued himself from confusing situations into the hard necessity of duty. The uniform of the senior customs official conceals what takes place in the private sphere of his eventful life. And above all one thing: with his service, the father unreservedly recognizes the authority on which it is built. Even if Alois Hitler, as was often observed among the civil service of Austria at that time, indulged in liberal views, the authority of the state, expressed in the person of the Emperor, remained absolutely untouchable for him. Through this unconditional integration into an authority recognized with innermost conviction, Alois Hitler steered through all dangerous shallows and reefs of his life, on which he sometimes threatened to founder as a result of his impulsive nature.

However, the father's stubborn efforts to make Adolf a civil servant also appear in a different light. For the father, it was not merely about the usual decision regarding his son's future profession. Rather, he was concerned with securing a position for his son that was tied to the recognition of this authority. It is quite possible that the father was not at all aware of the deeper reason for this attitude. But the tenacity with which he represented his standpoint to his son proves that he probably sensed what was at stake for Adolf. He had already gotten to know his son that well.

But Adolf refused just as stubbornly to fulfill his father's will, although he had only very vague ideas about all that he wanted to become in the future. Becoming a painter was probably the worst thing he could expect of his father; for it meant, to a certain extent, a constant strolling about and an unstable way of life—exactly what the father wanted to prevent under all circumstances.

With this refusal to become a civil servant, Adolf Hitler's life branched off sharply from his father's path. Here, at this point, lies the great decision of his life. Here Adolf set the course for the uncertain vessel of his life and thus gave it, finally and irrevocably, a different direction. I experienced the years that followed this decision at Adolf Hitler's side. I saw how seriously he searched for a path into the future, not just for work and existence, but for real tasks that were appropriate to his talent.

In vain, shortly before his death, the father had led the thirteen-year-old to the Linz main customs office to show him his future sphere of activity. Fundamentally, behind the stubborn refusal to embark on his father's career lay the rejection of the existing state authority—that power, in other words, which in the father's eyes had still possessed absolute validity. Thus, the son's path led first into the unknown and ended, consequently, with Adolf Hitler, at the goal of his political career, embodying in his own person that state authority which he had so unerringly denied on the soil of his paternal homeland.

It seems as if the two characteristics that are so decisive for the character portrait of Adolf Hitler—the relentless consistency of his path on the one hand, and on the other, the addiction to changing everything existing—would contradict each other. In reality, however, they complemented each other. I have, without being able to explain it in detail at the time, clearly enough...

experienced. Although he set everything around him in constant motion, he nevertheless always remained the same. His impetuous desire for change ensured that, despite his consistent character, he did not remain rigid and immobile or commit himself too one-sidedly; conversely, the consistency of his nature gave the stormy will to change a clear direction, an unshakeably held goal. Both of these mutually reinforcing qualities appeared to me as the prerequisites of a revolutionary person.

Alois Hitler had died a sudden death. On January 3, 1903 — he was sixty-five years old at the time and still exceedingly vigorous and energetic — he went, as he did every day punctually at ten o'clock, to the neighboring tavern to drink his morning pint. Suddenly, he sank silently from his chair. Before a doctor or priest could arrive, he was dead.

When the fourteen-year-old son was led to his father's bier, he broke out, as witnesses report, into uncontrollable sobbing. A proof that Adolf's relationship with his father went much deeper than is commonly assumed.

SETTLING ACCOUNTS WITH SCHOOL

By the time I met Adolf Hitler, he had already completely finished with school. Although he was still attending the Realschule in Steyr at the time, from where he frequently traveled home, usually every Sunday. It was only for his mother's sake that he had resigned himself to this, as he called it, "very last attempt." The report card for the third grade of the Realschule in Linz had been so poor that it had been suggested to Mrs. Hitler that Adolf should continue his studies in another school. More accurately put: the troublesome student was only allowed to advance on the condition that he leave the Linz Realschule. In this way, the school in the provincial capital pushed students who seemed unsuitable to them off to smaller towns. Adolf himself was outraged by this underhanded method and regarded his attempt in the fourth grade of the Realschule in Steyr as a failure from the very beginning. He had by then become sufficiently acquainted with the school system and had reached the conviction that he no longer needed school for what he intended to do. What he lacked in knowledge, he preferred to acquire through self-study. Art had long since entered his life. He devoted himself to it with youthful passion, convinced that he was called to be an artist.

Compared to art, the school with its learning routine sank into gray monotony. Adolf finally wanted to be free from all compulsion and go his further way alone. He despised every young person who did not carve out their own path in life. To the same extent that he detached himself from the hated school system, our friendship gained value and significance for him. What the insignificant camaraderie of classmates had not given him before, he expected from his friend.

The external dates of his school attendance, which were only cursorily known to me at the time, can be easily determined:

May 2, 1895	Entry into the single-class primary school in Fischlham near Lambach.
1895/1896	Attended the lower division of this school from Hafeld.
1896/1897	Lambach primary school, second grade.
1897/1898	Third grade of the same school.
1898/1899	Primary school in Leonding, fourth grade.
1899/1900	Fifth grade of the same school.

1900/1901	First class of the k. u. k. Staatsrealschule in Linz, Steingasse.
1901/1902	First class repeated.
1902/1903	Second class Realschule Linz.
1903/1904	Third class Realschule Linz.
1904/1905	Fourth class Realschule Steyr.
Autumn 1905	Repeat examination at this school.

There is also sufficient authentic material regarding the successes or failures of his school attendance. Individual class reports can be reconstructed from the school catalogs.

In primary school, Hitler was always one of the best students. He learned easily and progressed very well even without much diligence.

The teacher Karl Mittermaier in Fischlham, with whom the instruction began, dismissed him with a "report card full of straight A's." Mittermaier lived to see the year 1938 and was, of course, immediately questioned for memories of his former student. Although he still had a good memory of the pale, sickly boy whom his half-sister, twelve-year-old Angela, had always led over from Hafeld to the Fischlham school, he could say very little about it. Little Adolf had followed his every word. His school things were always in order. Otherwise, he had noticed nothing unusual, neither for better nor for worse. Incidentally, as Reich Chancellor in 1939, Adolf visited the one-room school in Fischlham and sat down again in the same school desk at which he had learned to read and write. As was his habit, he used the visit to change everything existing: he personally bought up the old, still-preserved schoolhouse and initiated the construction of a new, beautiful school. The female teacher who had replaced the old headmaster Mittermaier was invited with her school class to the Obersalzberg.

In Lambach as well, where Adolf Hitler attended the second and third classes of primary school, he received nothing but straight A's from his teacher Franz Rechberger. At that time, he joined the boys' choir of the monastery.

Regarding the school years in Leonding, fourth and fifth primary school classes, the teachers Sixtl and Brauneis have absolutely nothing remarkable to say, nor anything cryptic or veiled. In history and geography, he knew more than many a teacher, Sixtl said.

But things changed when Adolf Hitler entered the Linz Realschule in September 1900. He himself writes about those years:

"Certainly, at first, only my apparent failure in school was evident. What pleased me, I learned, especially everything that I thought I would later need as a painter. What seemed insignificant to me in this regard or otherwise did not attract me much, I sabotaged completely. My reports during this time represented, depending on the subject and its..."

assessment, always represented extremes. Alongside 'praiseworthy' and 'excellent', 'sufficient' or even 'insufficient'. By far my best achievements were in Geography and even more so in World History. The two favorite subjects in which I led the class."

Based on this self-portrayal, one usually gets a false picture of Adolf's school days. Even if Adolf told me about them only reluctantly and always in a strange state of agitation, our friendship lay, to a certain extent, in the shadow of his school days. Thus, I received a significantly different picture than the one he himself recorded fifteen years later.

Initially, it was difficult for the eleven-year-old boy at all to assert himself in the unfamiliar environment. Every day he had to cover the long distance from Leonding into the city to the Realschule located in Steingasse. He often told me, when we came to the old fortress tower on our hikes, which lies there on a hill about halfway to the city, that this walk to school had nevertheless been the most beautiful thing for him in those years. In any case, this more than hour-long walk to school secured for him a remnant of freedom, which he knew how to appreciate all the more as he had previously grown up entirely in the countryside. In the city, everything appeared strange to him at first. His classmates, mostly coming from elegant, wealthy Linz families, did not accept the strange boy who came in daily "from the farmers." The professors, however, only cared about him as far as their subject was concerned. It was all so different from the primary school with the cozy teacher who knew every one of his students exactly and sat with the father at the citizens' table in the evenings. From primary school, the boy was used to getting through the school year without any special effort. Initially, he also tried to get by in the Realschule with improvisations, in which he was a master. This was necessary if only because rote learning, which the professors took so seriously, gave him little pleasure. But the usual excuses and turns of phrase failed here. So he withdrew entirely into his defiance and let everything run as it did. In class, he was hardly noticed. He had no friends or comrades as in primary school and sought none either. Several times, individual ones of these pampered model boys had let him feel that he, the boy coming from the village, was not taken seriously at this school. That was enough for him to isolate himself even more strongly from his classmates. It is significant that not one of the numerous classmates could claim a close bond or friendship with him, not even retrospectively. The reaction from the school's side was not long in coming. The director of the institution, Government Councilor Hans Commenda, who also taught mathematics in this class, classified Hitler as "insufficient," just as the

Max Engstier, the natural history teacher feared by all students.

Thus, in his very first school year, the Realschule student Hitler brought home a report card to his father that contained two "unsatisfactory" marks and, furthermore, a note stating that the student must repeat the grade. Adolf never told me how his father reacted to this report card at the time. But it is easy to imagine.

So he had to start all over again! The class supervisor was now Professor Dr. Eduard Huemer, who also taught German and French, the only foreign language Adolf Hitler ever dealt with—or more precisely, was forced to deal with. But in the meantime, he had "acclimatized" somewhat. The repetition of the first grade was successful. He was promoted to the second grade. But in this one, he only barely scraped through. Once again, the father had to sign a report card that showed an "unsatisfactory" in mathematics; this time it came from Professor Heinrich Drasch. One could not say, therefore, that the teachers' rebelliousness was to blame for this assessment. Hitler hated mathematics because it was too dry for him and required strict, systematic work. We spoke about it many times. Later in Vienna, Hitler realized that he would need mathematics if he wanted to become a master builder or an architect. Nevertheless, his intense dislike for it remained.

The third grade again ended with two "unsatisfactory" marks, once more in mathematics and also in German, although he later counted Professor Huemer among the teachers he held in some regard. The death of his father occurred during this year. Professor Huemer made it clear to Hitler's mother that a promotion to the fourth grade would only be possible at another, i.e., out-of-town school. It is therefore incorrect that Adolf Hitler was expelled from the Realschule in Linz. He was merely transferred "to the countryside."

If his father's command had kept him in school until then, it was now his mother's love that urged him to continue his studies. He moved to Steyr reluctantly. After reading Dante's "Divine Comedy," he referred to the school there to me as the "Place of the Damned." In Steyr, Hitler lived with a court official, Edler von Cichini, at Grünmarkt 19, but used every free moment to come to Linz. The result was, as was to be expected, poor. Even the remedial examination completed between September 1 and 15, 1905, could no longer change that. Alongside the consistent "unsatisfactory" in mathematics, an "unsatisfactory" in "Descriptive Geometry" appeared.

In the assessment that Professor Dr. Huemer, Hitler's class supervisor for three years, gave about his student during the high treason trial after the...

unsuccessful November Putsch of 1923, it states: "Hitler was decidedly talented, albeit one-sidedly, but had little self-control; at the very least, he was considered stubborn, high-handed, dogmatic, and short-tempered, and it was visibly difficult for him to fit into the framework of a school. He was also not industrious, for otherwise, given his undeniable natural talents, he could have achieved much better results."

At the conclusion of his far from positive assessment, Professor Doctor Huemer lets his heart speak and adds: "But as experience teaches, school does not prove much for life, and while the model pupils very often vanish without a trace, the school rascals only develop once they have attained the necessary elbow room. My former student Hitler seems to me to be of this breed, and I wish him from the bottom of my heart that he may soon recover from the hardships and excitements of recent times and yet still experience the fulfillment of those ideals which he cherishes in his bosom and which, like for every German man, would only truly redound to his honor."

These words, written in 1924, are certainly still free from subsequently bestowed praise. They testify to a striking solidarity between teacher and former student. Indirectly, Professor Dr. Huemer is expressing that the ideals for which Adolf Hitler stood before the judges at that time originated from the school. In this regard, it should be considered that Hitler was by no means a good student in German, which Dr. Huemer taught, as evidenced alone by the spelling errors that can be found in his postcards and letters addressed to me.

Among the teachers who were likewise judged "positively" by the Realschule student Hitler—not according to the subject they taught, but rather according to their disposition—was the teacher of natural history, Professor Theodor Gissinger, who had replaced Professor Engstler. Gissinger was a great lover of nature, an enduring hiker, an enthusiastic gymnast, and mountain climber. Among the professors standing in the nationalist camp, he was considered the most radical. The political conflicts that filled the era at that time also manifested themselves within the teaching staff; indeed, they often had a sharper effect there than in public. This atmosphere, highly charged with political tensions, became far more decisive for the intellectual development of the young Hitler than anything that was lectured. As it usually is: it is not the subject matter, but the atmosphere that determines the value or worthlessness of the school.

Incidentally, Professor Gissinger also subsequently provided an assessment of his former student Hitler. This remarkable document reads: "For me in Linz, Hitler stood out neither in a good nor a bad sense. He was also not exactly a leader of the class. His figure was..."

slender and upright, his face mostly pale and very thin, almost like that of a lung patient, his gaze immensely open, his eyes shining.”

The third and last of the teachers judged "positively" by Hitler was his history professor, Dr. Leopold Pötsch. He is the only one among nearly a dozen teachers whom Adolf Hitler accepted even then. As much as Hitler disliked speaking to me about his former teachers, Pötsch was an exception.

The words Hitler dedicated to his history teacher are well known:

“It was perhaps decisive for my entire later life that fortune once gave me a teacher for history who was one of the very few who understood how to make this viewpoint (to retain the essential, to forget the unessential) the dominant one for instruction and examination. In my then professor, Dr. Leopold Pötsch, at the Realschule in Linz, this requirement was embodied in a truly ideal way. An old gentleman, of a demeanor as kind as it was firm, he was able, particularly through his dazzling eloquence, not only to captivate us but truly to carry us away. Even today, I remember with slight emotion the gray-haired man who, in the fire of his presentation, sometimes made us forget the present, conjured us back into past times, and formed dry historical memory into living reality from the veil of mist of millennia. We sat there then, often inspired to a bright glow, sometimes even moved to tears.”

Leopold Pötsch is the only personality mentioned by name by Hitler in his book "Mein Kampf." He dedicates two and a half pages to the memory of this man.

Certainly, this retrospective judgment is exaggerated. Proof of this is that Hitler finished his school career with a "satisfactory" in history, although the change of schools may perhaps also be to blame. Nevertheless, one must not underestimate the influence of this teacher on the extremely receptive boy. If one says that the most valuable thing about the study of history is the enthusiasm it generates, then Dr. Pötsch fulfilled his task in this case.

Pötsch came from the southern borderlands and, before coming to Linz, had taught in Marburg* and other places on the German linguistic border. He thus brought with him a vivid experience from the struggle for national identity. I believe that that unconditional love for German nationhood, which Pötsch combined with the rejection of the Habsburg state, was the decisive experience for the young Hitler. With this glowing confession of German nationhood, he gained a firm standpoint for his further life.

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* Referring to Marburg an der Drau in Lower Styria, today Yugoslavia.

Adolf Hitler remained grateful to his old history teacher throughout his life, just as his attachment to school and teachers generally increased the further the progressing time moved the school experience into the distance. When Hitler came to Klagenfurt in 1938, he saw Pötsch again, who was spending the evening of his life in St. Andrä in the Lavant Valley. For over an hour, Hitler stayed alone in a room with the frail old man. There are no witnesses to the conversation between the two. But when Hitler left the room, he declared to his companions: "You have no idea what I owe to this old man."

But these retrospective judgments by Hitler about his teachers should no more confuse the picture that emerges of his school days than the retrospective judgments of the teachers about their former student, or even less the very contradictory judgments of the countless classmates. The fact is—and I am a witness to this—that Adolf left school with an elementary hatred. I took care not to bring the conversation around to school. But every now and then, he had to discharge his feelings violently.

He did not attempt to stay in touch with any of the professors, not even with Pötsch. On the contrary! He avoided the professors and no longer recognized them when he encountered them on the street.

Parallel to the external conflict with the school ran a second internal contact, which was much more essential for him: the conflict with his mother. One must not misunderstand this expression. Adolf tried to spare his mother as much as he possibly could. But this was impossible at the moment he finally failed in school and thus left the path mapped out by his father.

This spiritual conflict had occupied Adolf much more than the constant guerrilla warfare with the professors. What could bad grades have meant to him? To his mother, however, they showed that Adolf would not reach the set goal.

I witnessed it myself how Adolf tried to spare his mother, who meant everything to him, during the final period of his school days, and yet could not spare her because it was impossible to convince her that he had to take a different professional path. Which "other path" this was remained unclear even to himself. It remained unclear for many years, beyond the death of his mother. She took this, her greatest worry about her son's future, with her to the grave.

In that gloomy autumn of 1905, things for Adolf stood on a knife's edge. Seen from the outside, the decision facing the sixteen-year-old was: should he repeat the fourth grade of the Realschule in Steyr or leave school forever? For him, however, this meant much more: should he, for his mother's sake, follow a path that he himself...

considered hopeless and wrong, to continue, or should he simply accept the suffering that he unintentionally had to inflict on his mother and take that "other" path, of which he could only say that it was a path to art, a description which, understandably, was in no way able to comfort his mother.

For Adolf, however, given his entire disposition, this was not a decision in the true sense at all; for in reality, he was not faced with a choice to decide one way or the other. He could not act otherwise, left school, undeterred took the second path, and consistently stuck to it. But he knew how hard his mother took this decision. I know that he suffered immensely because of it.

In those months, in the autumn of 1905, Adolf went through a severe crisis, the most severe I experienced with him in the years of our friendship. Outwardly, this was expressed by the fact that he became seriously ill. He himself speaks in his book of a lung ailment. His sister Paula reports a hemorrhage. Still others claim it was a self-suggested stomach ailment. At that time, I went to Humboldtstraße almost every day and visited Adolf at his bedside; for I had to constantly report to him about Stefanie, whom he already adored at that time. According to my memory, that illness was indeed a lung ailment, specifically a catarrh of the apex of the lung. I know that for a long time afterward he was plagued by coughing and unpleasant catarrhs, especially on damp, foggy days.

This illness also released him, in his mother's eyes, from the obligation to continue attending school. In this respect, therefore, this illness was very convenient for the decision that had been made. To what extent he worked himself up into this illness, to what extent it was triggered by his inner crisis, to what extent it was merely constitutionally determined, I am unable to decide.

When Adolf rose from his sickbed, he had long since come to terms with himself. School was now finally behind him. Without the slightest doubt or hesitation, he steered toward the career of an artist.

There followed two years in his life without a clearly visible goal to the outside world. "In the hollowness of a life of leisure," is how he himself calls the phase when, while writing his book "Mein Kampf," he discovered this gap in his curriculum vitae with some unease. Seen from the outside, this description is correct. He no longer attended school, did not bother with any practical vocational training, lived with his mother, and let himself be supported by her.

In reality, however, this period of his life was filled with restless activity. He drew, he painted, he wrote poetry, he read. I cannot remember Adolf ever having nothing to do or feeling bored for even a single hour. If something happened to bore him by chance, such as a play we visited, this boredom gave him such a violent reason to reject the piece that he immediately worked himself up into the highest state of activity through this rejection. Admittedly, his activity was still not very systematic. There was no specific purpose, no clear goal to be seen. He merely accumulated impressions, experiences, and material around him with unheard-of energy. What would eventually come of it remained open. He was just searching; he searched everywhere and always.

In doing so, Adolf had found a way to prove to his mother how pointless further school attendance would have been for him. He proved it — typical of his way of tackling problems! — by proving to his mother the pointlessness of the school system itself. "One can learn much better alone!" he explained to her. He became a member of the library of the Adult Education Association in Bismarckstraße. He joined the Museum Association and borrowed books there as well. In addition, he used the lending library of the Steurer and L. Haßlinger bookstores. From this point on, I never see Adolf in my memory otherwise than surrounded by books, especially by the volumes of his favorite work, which he never let out of his hand, the "German Heroic Sagas." How often did he compel me, who had just come from the noisy carding machine, to take home and study this or that book he had read, so that he could talk to me about it. Now, suddenly, everything was there in him that had been missing in school: the diligence, the interest, the joy of learning. He had, as he said, beaten the school with its own weapons!

STEFANIE

To be perfectly honest, it is not at all pleasant for me that I am—besides Stefanie herself—the only witness who can report on the youthful love of my friend, which lasted for more than four years from the beginning of his sixteenth year; I fear that with the description of the truthful facts I will disappoint all those who expect sensational revelations from it. Adolf's relationship with this girl, who came from a respected family, was entirely within the bounds of prevailing custom and was absolutely normal, unless the concepts of sexual morality have been so reversed in today's generation that it is considered abnormal when, in a relationship between young people like these—to put it briefly—"nothing happened."

Furthermore, please forgive me if I do not mention the surname of this girl or her name after marriage in this book. I have occasionally mentioned it to men who are concerned with researching the youth of Adolf Hitler and of whose seriousness I was able to convince myself. Stefanie, who was about one to two years older than Adolf, later married a high-ranking officer, and understanding will therefore be shown for my discretion.

In the early summer of 1905, during our usual evening stroll, Adolf grabbed me firmly by the arm and asked me excitedly how I liked that slender, blonde girl who was walking there on her mother's arm across the Landstraße. "Because I love her!" he added decisively.

Stefanie was a stately girl of tall, slender build. She wore thick, blonde hair, which she mostly pinned back in a bun. Her eyes were very beautiful, bright and expressive. She was remarkably well-dressed. Her demeanor also proved that she came from a good, well-to-do home.

The graduation photo taken by photographer Hans Zivny in Urfahr dates somewhat before that encounter. Stefanie must have been seventeen, at most eighteen years old at the time. It shows a girl with pretty, appealing features. The expression of the very symmetrical face is exceedingly natural and open. The rich hair, still as

Very impressive picture of Adolf Hitler's father.

...but to the structure of Klara Hitler, who after the 3rd of January 1903 in Leonding deceased customs official's widow, a widow's pension in the amount of the statutory and the supplement for her three minor children standing children.

First and Last Name	Detailed description of the service relationship... [illegible] ...pension entitlement... [illegible] ...official documents.	From the designated period of service, the following is recognized for the calculation:				Urgent not eligible Calculation and further instructions
		suitable		not suitable		
		Years	Months	Years	Months	
Alois Hitler deceased customs official **Klara Hitler** widow, born Pölzl 42 years old Children: Alois, born 13/1 1883 Adolf, born 20/4 1889 Paula, born 21/1 1896	Hitler's widow was granted, because the service-related documents were partially missing, a provisional widow's pension. After the missing service documents were obtained and on the basis of the Imperial Decree of 9/12 1866 with regard to the fact that the deceased had completed a total of 42 years of service, the final pension was set at 1100 fl = 2200 Kronen annually. For the period from 25/6 1895 to 3/1 1903, the deceased was in the XI. rank class, and according to the law of 18/4 1907 R.G.Bl. No. 220, the pension was increased by 10% as of 1/1 1903 and from 1/1 1907 a fixed supplement of 2420 Kronen was granted. To Klara Hitler in Leonding near Linz, via the Parish Office Leonding. 15/1 1903 329.-					

Application of Hitler's mother for the granting of a widow's pension.

wearing a "Gretel" hairstyle, reinforces this impression. Something fresh and unconstrained lies over this healthy girl's face.

The evening stroll along the Landstraße was a cherished custom for the residents of the city of Linz at that time. The ladies looked at the shop windows and made purchases. One met acquaintances and — the young people entertained each other in a harmless way. Flirting was done eagerly. The young officers were particularly good at it. Stefanie apparently lived in Urfahr, for she always came from the direction of the bridge up to the main square and promenaded down the Landstraße on her mother's arm. Almost exactly at five o'clock in the evening, mother and daughter appeared. We waited at the Schmiedtor corner. Since neither Adolf nor I had been introduced to the young lady, it would have been improper to greet Stefanie. A look had to replace the missing greeting. Adolf then did not let Stefanie out of his sight. During this time, there was not much to be done with him. During this hour, he appeared transformed, quite different from usual. One could get along with him much more easily than usual during this time.

I found out that Stefanie's mother was a widow and actually lived in Urfahr, and that the young man who appeared now and then at Stefanie's side and intensely irritated Adolf was her brother, who was studying law in Vienna and belonged to a student fraternity. This information calmed Adolf down significantly.

Occasionally, however, young officers also appeared and kept the two ladies company. Against these young lieutenants in their handsome uniforms, poor, pale young men, such as Adolf was, naturally stood no chance. Adolf felt this very clearly and vented his feelings in eloquent words. His anger eventually turned into a radical rejection of the entire officer class and everything military. "Vain empty-heads," he called them. It visibly bothered him that Stefanie associated with such "idlers" who wore corsets and used perfume, as he claimed.

Certainly, Stefanie had no idea how deep Adolf's affection for her was. She considered him a somewhat shy, but nonetheless strikingly persistent, so-called "devoted" admirer. When she answered his questioning look with a smile, he was happy and fell into a state of mind that I had never otherwise observed in him. Then everything in the world was good and beautiful and well-ordered, and he was content. But when Stefanie, which happened just as frequently, looked coolly past him, he was as if crushed and would have liked best to put an end to himself and the world.

Certainly, these are phenomena that are generally typical for a first great love. Thus, one will perhaps also understand Adolf's relationship to...

to try to dismiss Stefanie with the label "schoolboy crush." This label perhaps applied to the view Stefanie had of this relationship. But for Adolf, this relationship was more than mere infatuation. The fact alone that this relationship lasted over four years, indeed casting its glow even over the subsequent years of misery in Vienna, proves that this feeling in Adolf was deep and genuine and true love. A proof of the depth of this feeling is the exclusivity with which Adolf viewed this relationship. While a constant change is typical for youthful infatuation, for Adolf during these years there was no other female being but Stefanie. He did not even see that other girls existed alongside her. Stefanie embodied for him femininity par excellence. I cannot remember that any other girl ever occupied his mind. When later in Vienna Lucie Weidt enthralled us as the performer of Elsa in "Lohengrin," he found as the highest praise that she reminded him in many ways of Stefanie. In terms of her appearance, Stefanie would have been the ideal performer of Elsa and other female characters from the music dramas of Richard Wagner. I know that we racked our brains for a long time over whether Stefanie perhaps possessed the musical talent necessary for this task and a suitable voice. Adolf took this almost for granted. It was precisely the Valkyrie-like nature of her appearance that attracted him again and again and inflamed him to bright enthusiasm. He composed countless love poems for Stefanie. "Hymn to the Beloved" was the name of one that he read to me from the small, black booklet with the flexible cover. Stefanie rode as a lady of the castle in a dark blue, flowing velvet dress on a white palfrey across flower-strewn meadows. Her loose hair fell from her shoulders like a golden flood. A bright spring sky stood above it. Everything was pure, radiant happiness. I can still see Adolf's face, enraptured in glowing ecstasy, and hear his voice speaking these verses. Stefanie filled his being so completely that everything he said, everything he did, everything he planned for the future, related directly or indirectly to her. With the growing alienation from his parental home, as is typical for every young person in these years, Stefanie gained more and more influence over my friend, and all this without him having spoken a single word to her. I thought much more soberly in these matters and remember very clearly that there were several arguments between the two of us on this point, just as my memory of Adolf's relationship with Stefanie is much clearer than all others. He always claimed it was entirely sufficient that he one day step before Stefanie. Immediately everything else would then be clarified, without a single word being spoken between them. Between such unusual people as he and Stefanie were, there was no need at all of the forms of linguistic communication otherwise common among humans. Extraordinary people understand each other with the help of intuition, he explained to me. No matter how remote the subject, Adolf was always convinced that Stefanie not only knew his plan exactly but would also have just as immense an interest in it as he did himself. When I then interjected that he had not yet told Stefanie anything about it and that I doubted whether she cared about such things at all, he flew into a rage and shouted at me: "You just don't understand that because you cannot understand the meaning of an extraordinary love." I asked him, in order to calm him down, whether he intended to convey the knowledge of such detailed problems to Stefanie solely through further exchanges of glances. He merely said: "Possible! One cannot explain that. In Stefanie is everything that is in me."

I was careful, of course, not to interfere too far in these delicate matters. But I was nevertheless pleased that Adolf placed so much trust in me. To no other person, not even to his mother, had he spoken of Stefanie.

The same exclusivity, which for him was a self-evident commandment, he also demanded of Stefanie. For a long time, he interpreted her interest in other young men, especially in officers, only as a kind of self-created distraction with which Stefanie wanted to hide her stormy feelings for him. But this view was repeatedly replaced by fits of raging jealousy. Adolf was deathly unhappy when Stefanie overlooked the pale youth waiting at the Schmiedtoreck and turned her interest to one of the young lieutenants who frequently accompanied her. How could the questioning glances of this secret admirer have sufficed for a young, fun-loving girl when others expressed their adoration to her in much more sophisticated forms? But I was never allowed to say such a thing to Adolf.

"What should I do?" he asked me one day — a question I had never heard from him in other cases. I was very proud that he asked me for advice. Finally, I could feel superior to him for once. "Quite simple," I explained to him, "you greet the two ladies, step up to them, introduce yourself to the mother by stating your name with your hat raised, and then ask her for permission to speak to the daughter and to accompany the two ladies."

Adolf looked at me doubtfully and considered my suggestion for a while. But then he declined. "What shall I say if the mother asks me about my profession? I must surely name my profession during the introduction. Best if I add it right to the name. 'Adolf Hitler, academic painter' or something similar. But I am not that yet. First I must be that. Then I can introduce myself. For the mother, the profession is probably more important than the name!"

For a long time I believed that Adolf was simply too shy to speak to Stefanie. But it was not shyness that held him back. Even then, he possessed such a high conception of the relationship between man and woman that the usual way of making an acquaintance seemed unworthy to him. He sharply rejected every form of flirting. He was convinced that Stefanie knew no other wish than to wait until he came to ask her to be his wife. I was by no means convinced of this. But Adolf had already, as with everything unresolved that occupied him, prepared a firm plan. What the father had not succeeded in, and even less the school, what even the mother had sought in vain to achieve, this strange, unknown girl, with whom he had not yet spoken a word, succeeded in: he made a precise plan for his future, through which it would be possible for him to ask for Stefanie's hand in four years.

The result of hours of conversation about this difficult question ended with me receiving the assignment from Adolf to first inquire even more thoroughly about Stefanie.

In the Music Society, I knew a cellist whom I had occasionally seen speaking with Stefanie's brother. By way of the cellist, I learned that Stefanie's father, a high-ranking government official, had died a few years ago. The mother lived in well-ordered circumstances and received a corresponding widow's pension, with the help of which she provided her two children with the best possible education. Stefanie had attended the girls' lyceum and had already passed her Matura. She probably had—given her beauty, naturally!—a large number of admirers. She liked to dance and had visited almost all the larger balls in the city with her mother last winter. However, to the cellist's knowledge, she was not yet engaged.

Adolf was very satisfied with the result of my inquiry, although it seemed quite natural to him that Stefanie was not yet engaged. One point of my explanations, however, troubled him greatly: Stefanie danced. And, as the cellist assured me, she liked to dance and danced well.

This did not fit at all into the image Adolf had made of Stefanie. A Valkyrie moving across the parquet on the arm of some "blockhead" of a lieutenant was a ghastly idea to him. Where did this strict, almost ascetic trait in him come from, which kept him from all the natural joys of youth? Adolf's father had, after all, been a jovial man and, as a young, handsome customs official, had certainly turned many a girl's head. Why was Adolf so completely different? He was, after all, a thoroughly attractive young man, well-built, slender, his somewhat severe and far too serious features were enlivened by the unusual expression of his eyes, whose peculiar brilliance could even make one forget the sickly pallor of his face. But dancing was as completely contrary to his nature as smoking or sitting in a tavern drinking beer. That simply did not exist for him, although no one, not even his mother, encouraged him in this attitude.

Finally, there was something with which I, who was otherwise always so extensively teased by him, could tease him myself. "You must learn to dance, Adolf!" I declared with dead seriousness.

With that, dancing first became a problem for him. I remember well how, during our lonely walks at that time, the topic was no longer "theater" or the "new construction of the Danube Bridge," but rather the problem of dancing. As with everything he could not immediately master, he had turned it into a general matter. "Imagine a crowded ballroom," he once explained to me, "and imagine you were deaf. The music that moves these people cannot be heard by you. Then observe this senseless moving about of people, which after all leads to no goal. Are these people not totally crazy?"

"That won't help you, Adolf," I replied, "Stefanie likes to dance. If you want to win her over, you must move about just as senselessly and crazily as the others!"

It took no more than that to send him into a rage.

"No, no, never!" he shouted in my face. "Never will I dance, do you hear? Stefanie only dances because society, on which she is unfortunately dependent, forces her to. As soon as she has become my wife, she will no longer have the slightest need to dance!"

For once, his own words could not entirely convince him this time; for again and again, he brought up the question of dancing. I suspected him of even trying a few cautious steps at home behind closed doors with his little sister. Frau Hitler had bought a piano at the time for Adolf's sake. Perhaps I would soon receive the order to play a waltz on it. I thought he would be deaf while dancing. He surely didn't need music to be able to move. I also wanted to say something to him about the harmony between music and physical movement, which he apparently had not yet understood.

But it did not come to that. Adolf continued to brood and searched for a solution. For days, for weeks, he pondered over it. In his dejection, he hit upon a frantic idea. He seriously thought about kidnapping Stefanie. He outlined his plan to me in every detail. My role in it was not very rewarding. I was to involve the mother in a...

to involve him in conversation while he took possession of the girl. "And what will you both live on then?" I asked prosaically. This question sobered him somewhat. The bold plan was abandoned.

To make matters worse, Stefanie was also in a less than pleasant mood at that time. She walked past the Schmiedtoreck with her face turned away, as if Adolf did not exist at all. This brought him to the brink of despair. "I can't stand it any longer," he cried. "I'm going to end it!"

It was the first and — as far as I remember — the only time that Adolf seriously thought about suicide. He told me he wanted to jump over the railing of the bridge into the Danube. Then everything would be over and done with. But Stefanie would have to go to her death together with him. He did not want to forgo that. Again, a plan was developed in every detail. Each of the individual phases in which the gruesome tragedy was to unfold was described in depth, and my role in it was determined in detail, even how I should behave afterwards as the sole survivor. The somber scene still moved me in my nightly dreams.

But soon the sun shone from the sky again, and that happiest day in June 1906 arrived for Adolf, which he himself has probably forgotten as little as I have. Summer was near, and a flower parade was held in Linz. As usual, Adolf waited for me in front of the Carmelite Church, where I went to service every Sunday with my parents. Then we positioned ourselves at the Schmiedtoreck. The spot was extremely favorable because the street is very narrow here and the carriages driving in the parade were forced to drive very close to the sidewalk. Already, stirring march music resounded from the main square. The band of the Hessian Regiment passed by with flashing instruments. Behind them, the individual carriages followed, covered all over with flowers, from which young and older ladies waved to the spectators. But Adolf saw and heard nothing of it. Feverishly he waited for Stefanie. I was already about to give up hope of seeing the expected one, when Adolf grabbed my arm so violently that it hurt.

On a pretty, flower-decorated carriage, mother and daughter turn into Schmiedtorstraße. I can still see the image clearly before me. The mother, in a light gray silk dress, holds a dainty red parasol above her, through which the slanted rays conjure a reddish breath onto Stefanie's countenance, who wears a delicate silk dress. Not with roses like the other carriages, but with simple field flowers Stefanie has decorated her vehicle. The whole carriage is adorned with red poppies, white daisies, and blue cornflowers. Stefanie holds a bouquet of the same flowers in her hand. The carriage comes closer. Adolf is transported from the earth. Never before has he seen Stefanie seen her as enchanting as today. Now the carriage has reached us, quite close in front of us. Then a beam from bright eyes strikes Adolf. Stefanie laughs at him, carefree in all her Sunday festivity, takes a flower from the bouquet and throws it to him.

I have never seen Adolf happier in my life than in that hour. When the carriage had passed by, he pressed me into the quiet Klostergasse. Then we hurried onto the now deserted promenade. Deeply moved, he gazed at the flower, this visible pledge of her love. I can still hear his voice today, trembling with excitement, in my ear: "She is fond of me! You saw it. She is fond of me!"

In the following months, as his decision to finally give up his studies at the Realschule had brought him into conflict with his mother and he lay ill, his love for Stefanie was his only comfort; he carried Stefanie's flower in a locket with him. Never did Adolf need me so much as his friend as he did then; for since I was the only person to whom he had entrusted his secret, he could only obtain news about Stefanie through me. Every day at the usual hour I had to take up post at the Schmiedtor corner to report everything to him about Stefanie that I could observe, especially who had spoken to mother and daughter. That I alone stood at the corner in question must, in Adolf's view, have immensely startled Stefanie. This, however, was by no means the case, yet I kept it to myself. That Stefanie could also please me was something that, fortunately, never entered Adolf's thoughts; for the slightest suspicion in this direction would have meant the end of our friendship.

But there was no reason for that, and so I could share my observations with my poor friend every time completely without inhibition. Adolf's mother had noticed for a long time what changes had taken place in her son. One evening, I remember it well, for I was greatly embarrassed by it, she asked me straight out: "What is the matter with Adolf, Mr. Kubizek, that he waits so impatiently for you?" I stammered some excuse and went as quickly as possible to Adolf in his room.

He was happy when I could bring him news of Stefanie: "She has a good soprano," I once explained to him. Then he jumped up: "How do you know that?" — "I walked quite close behind her for a while and heard her speak. I understand enough about music that I can hear a good soprano in that bright, pure voice!" How glad Adolf was about that. And I was satisfied that he, who lay worn out in bed, was so happy.

I always had to hurry away from my stroll by the fastest route to Humboldtstrasse. Often I found Adolf eagerly drawing an extensive plan. "Now it is decided," he said with grim seriousness after I had delivered my report, "I will build the house for Stefanie in the Renaissance style after all!" Then I had to give my judgment on the plan, especially whether I was satisfied with the layout and dimensions of the music salon. He had taken care that the room would have good acoustics. I was then to say where the grand piano should be placed. And so it went on. All of this was spoken in a tone as if the realization of these plans was no longer to be doubted. A timid question about money was dismissed with a brusque "Oh, never mind money!", a phrase I heard from him many times. We got into an argument over the question of where this magnificent villa would be built; for as a musician, I fought for Italy. Adolf, however, insisted that this villa could only stand in Germany, near a major city that would enable him and Stefanie to attend the opera and concerts.

Adolf could hardly rise from his sickbed before he was already going into town and waiting at the Schmiedtoreck. He was still very pale and suffering. Punctual as always, Stefanie appeared on her mother's arm. She saw Adolf, pale, with hollow, sunken cheeks, and smiled at him. "Did you notice?" he asked me happily. From that hour on, his health began to improve.

When Adolf went to Vienna in the spring of 1906, I received exact instructions from him on how I was to behave toward Stefanie; for he was convinced that she would soon speak to me and ask whether my friend had fallen ill again, since I was standing alone at the Schmiedtoreck. To this question, I was to answer as follows: "My friend is not ill; rather, he had to travel to Vienna to begin his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts there. After completing these studies, he will spend a year traveling, abroad of course." (I insisted on being allowed to say "Italy"!) All right, Italy! "After four years, he will return and ask for your hand. In the event of your consent, preparations for the wedding would then be made immediately."

Naturally, I had to report constantly to Adolf in Vienna about Stefanie in writing. Since it was cheaper to write open postcards instead of letters, Adolf gave me a code name for Stefanie upon his departure. This name was: Benkieser. This was the name of a classmate of Adolf's. How much this "Benkieser" moved Adolf himself, even amidst the rich, diverse impressions in Vienna, is proven by a simple picture postcard he wrote to me on May 8, 1906. "It draws me back again to my..."

dear Linz and Urfahr," it says therein. The word Urfahr is underlined. By this, of course, Stefanie, who lived in Urfahr, was meant. "Want to or must see Benkieser again. I wonder what he is doing..."

A few weeks later, Adolf returned from Vienna. I picked him up from the train. I remember well how we took turns carrying his suitcase and how I had to tell him about Stefanie in great haste. We were in a great hurry; for in an hour the stroll began. Adolf did not want to believe that Stefanie had not asked about him. He assumed that she, of course, had felt just as much longing for him as he had for her. Secretly, however, he was glad after all that no opportunity had arisen for me to develop his grandiose plans for the future before Stefanie; for these now looked quite pitiful. Having arrived at Humboldtstraße, his mother was greeted. Then we hurried immediately to the Schmiedtoreck. Adolf waited in great excitement. Anxious minutes passed. Punctually, Stefanie appeared on the arm of her mother. A surprised look met Adolf. That was enough. He wanted nothing more.

But I became impatient. "You can see that she wants to be spoken to!" I declared to my friend.

"Tomorrow!" Adolf replied.

But tomorrow became the day after tomorrow, became weeks, months, years, without Adolf having changed this state of affairs on his own initiative, even though it moved him so violently and directly. That Stefanie did nothing that went beyond the very first phase of exchanging glances was a matter of course. To throw him a flower with a mischievous smile from the relaxed festive mood of the flower parade was the utmost Adolf could expect from her. Any step on her part that would have gone beyond the strictly drawn boundary of convention would, moreover, have destroyed in Adolf the image of Stefanie that he carried in his heart.

Perhaps this was the reason for his strange shyness: that he feared getting to know her better would destroy this ideal image. But for him, Stefanie was not only the epitome of feminine virtues, but also the woman who took the greatest interest in all his diverse and far-reaching plans. There was no human being, besides himself, to whom he attributed as much knowledge and interest as Stefanie. The slightest deviation from this image would have led to terrible disappointment for him. Of course, even in the first conversation with Stefanie, I am convinced, such disappointments would have occurred; for she was, fundamentally, a young, fun-loving girl like any other and certainly had the same interests as they did. In vain would Adolf have searched her for those grand thoughts and ideas that he so...

had stubbornly immersed himself in Stefanie, until she had become, so to speak, the female counterpart of his own person. Only the harshest distancing could preserve this image for him.

It is also highly revealing that the young Hitler, who rejects bourgeois society with unparalleled contempt, adheres more strictly to the laws and social norms of this so-despised world of the bourgeoisie in this love affair than many a member of this social class himself. The rules of bourgeois decency and good manners became for him almost the protective wall behind which he built his relationship with Stefanie. "I have not been introduced to her!" How often have I heard this word from him, although he was already accustomed to shrugging his shoulders and disregarding existing conventions. But this strict observance of social forms belonged to his entire being. It was expressed in his always neat clothing and careful behavior, as well as in his natural decency, which my mother liked so much about him. Never have I heard an ambiguous word or a joke of a similar kind from his mouth.

Not consciously, but certainly instinctively, the young Hitler found in his relations with Stefanie the only right way for him: he possessed a being whom he loved, and yet again did not possess. He organized his whole life around this beloved being as if he possessed her entirely. But since he himself avoided every actual encounter, this girl, although she visibly walked the earth for him, remained a being of his dream world into which he could project his wishes, plans, and ideas. Thus he preserved himself from straying from his own path; indeed, even more, this peculiar relationship increased his own will through the power of love. He sees Stefanie as his wife before him, he builds the house in which she lives with him, surrounds it with a magnificent park, and sets himself up with Stefanie much as he later did, albeit without her, on the Obersalzberg. This intertwining of dream and reality is characteristic of the young Hitler. And if there is a danger that the beloved being might slip entirely into the realm of his imagination, he hurries to the Schmiedtoreck and convinces himself that the being he loves really strides across this earth. Hitler was not strengthened in the path he had taken by what Stefanie really was, but by what he made of Stefanie in his imagination. Thus Stefanie was both for him: a part of reality, a part of wish and fantasy. Be that as it may, Stefanie was the most beautiful, the purest, and the most fruitful dream of his life.

ENTHUSIASM FOR RICHARD WAGNER

I intentionally follow the description of Adolf Hitler's romantic relationship with Stefanie with the chapter on his passionate enthusiasm for Richard Wagner; for these two areas of experience belong together. Just as Stefanie appeared to him as the epitome of all things feminine, which determined his life for many years, Richard Wagner—both the man and the work—became the epitome of what German art meant to him. Stefanie could never have so completely filled his every thought and endeavor if she had not, in her appearance, demeanor, and attitude, corresponded to the ideal of womanhood portrayed by Richard Wagner in his great music dramas. Again and again, Adolf sees his beloved as Elsa, as Brünnhilde, as Eva from "Die Meistersinger." His love transfigures Stefanie into a creation of the brilliant master himself, who, through a fortunate stroke of fate, descended from the dream world of Richard Wagner into reality. And Adolf's personal relationship with Stefanie is also entirely under the spell of his devotion to Richard Wagner. The reverse effect can also be observed: from the moment he met Stefanie, his inclination for Richard Wagner turned into true passion. It was only his love for this girl that heightened his artistic receptivity to the highest level of devotion. The fact that this love was entirely one-sided and was not even seriously reciprocated, and therefore had to remain unfulfilled, drove him all the more strongly toward the great master, to find in art the consolation for what was denied to him in his happy-unhappy love.

Adolf Hitler's relationship to the personality and work of Richard Wagner is filled with that unique consistency that defines his entire being. From his earliest youth until his death, he remained loyal to the man of Bayreuth. Just as Stefanie, in the course of this strange romantic relationship—which, according to the usual understanding, was not one at all—eventually became a creature of his own imagination, Adolf Hitler may also have projected much of his own nature into the figure of Richard Wagner. Because he changed everything that touched him through the power of his imagination and the strength of his devotion, he also created "his" personal Wagner. This relationship passed through every conceivable phase: the first childhood sense of being moved, the growing inclination of the boy, flaming enthusiasm of the youth, which intensifies to visionary ecstasy; with increasing insight and knowledge, the heightened artistic enjoyment of the man; external promotion of the work, comfort, refuge, and transfiguration.

Hitler's musical background was very modest. Besides his mother, Father Leonhard Grüner from the Benedictine Choristers' Foundation in Lambach must be mentioned in first place, who taught Adolf singing for two years. Adolf was eight years old when he entered the foundation's singing school, an extremely receptive age. Anyone who knows the cultivated singing culture of the old Austrian foundations knows that there is hardly a better musical education than this training in a well-conducted choir placed in earliest youth. Unfortunately, this promising beginning remained without continuation, although the boy's bright, steady voice delighted all who heard him sing. His father presumably had little interest in it. In his primary school reports, an "excellent" always shines in singing. At the secondary school (Realschule), however, there was no musical instruction whatsoever. Those who had an inclination for it were referred to private lessons, i.e., to attending a music school. Given the long walk from Leonding into the city, there would hardly have been time for it, even if his father had agreed to private musical instruction.

Adolf took a lively interest in my musical training. The mere fact that I understood a bit more about it than he did left him no peace. During our constant conversations on musical questions, he acquired all the usual expressions and phrases surprisingly quickly. He took, so to speak, the opposite path to the one I had taken: he spoke about everything without ever having studied it systematically! But through speaking about it, understanding itself also awakened in him. I can only say that even in the most distant, remote matters of music, he possessed a certain intuition that rarely deceived him. How often I marveled at his judgment in such delicate questions, because I saw only too well that in reality he knew nothing at all about them.

This somewhat unusual type of musical further education had a clear limit: as soon as it came to mastering an instrument, the most beautiful intuition was in vain. Here, only systematic learning, constant practice, perseverance, and diligence helped—consistently qualities for which my friend had little understanding. But he did not want to believe that it was so. His greater power of empathy, his fertile imagination, but above all his boundless self-confidence, should, he thought, be able to make up for those insignificant qualities of which I had spoken. Of course, as soon as he placed my viola under his chin and took up the bow, his certainty of victory was over. I remember well how

how astonished he himself was by it. When I took the instrument out of his hand to play something for him, he did not want to listen at all. It annoyed him that there were things that resisted his will. Of course, he was already too old for elementary instruction. One day he snapped at me harshly: "Now I would like to see if making music is really such sorcery as you always make it out to be!" With these words, he initiated his decision to learn to play the piano, convinced that he would master this instrument completely in the shortest possible time. He took lessons from the piano teacher Josef Prewratzky. But soon Adolf had to realize that it would not work without diligence and perseverance after all. With Prewratzky, he experienced something similar to what I did with my good old music sergeant Kopetzky. Prewratzky thought absolutely nothing of intuitive grasping and brilliant improvisation. He demanded clean fingering and strict discipline. Adolf fell into a delicious conflict. On the one hand, he was too proud to break off the attempt, on which he had placed such great hope, without result; on the other hand, this stupid "finger-drilling," as he called it, drove him mad. I sensed this conflict very soon, because in musical matters Adolf could not simply deceive me as he usually did. His furious outbursts about Prewratzky's "crazy musical gymnastics" became increasingly rare. Even as I climbed the stairs on Humboldtstrasse, I could hear that his progress in piano playing was not very far along. He himself avoided performing for me on the good Heitzmann instrument. The name Prewratzky was mentioned less and less frequently, and one day the piano lessons were abandoned quietly and without fanfare. I cannot say exactly how long Adolf endured this agonizing procedure, certainly no longer than a year. Still, it was a surprisingly long time during which a Mr. Prewratzky harassed a young Hitler. Nevertheless, when we later created an opera in our student digs in Vienna—it unfortunately remained unfinished!—he took on not only the poetic but also the musical part by indicating the individual leitmotifs to me on the grand piano. Despite all the failures, Adolf wanted to prove to me that in music it was the brilliant idea that mattered, and not the correct fingering.

Nevertheless, Adolf recognized my successes in the musical field without envy; indeed, he experienced the excitement, disappointments, and setbacks inseparably linked with these successes for me as intensely as if they had happened to himself. Again and again, he encouraged me in my intentions and goals. I knew that he believed in my musical talent. This realization was the strongest force for me. It held our friendship together unbreakably. Even if during the day I was only the ordinary upholsterer's apprentice, working in dust and fumes repaired moth-eaten upholstered chairs, in the evenings, when I came to Adolf, the last bit of dust vanished, and with it the last memory of the stifling workshop, and I found myself again with him and through him in the pure, sublime atmosphere of art.

How faithfully he shared sorrow and joy with me back then, when Franz Liszt's magnificent oratorio "The Holy Elisabeth" was performed! My trumpet teacher was the theater musician Viertelmeister. During a lesson, he suddenly asked me if I would like to participate in the great oratorio. The ground shook beneath my feet. "Let's start right away!" the good Viertelmeister declared immediately and went through the orchestral part for trumpet with me without much ado. Then came the rehearsals in the concert hall. For the first time, I got to know August Göllerich directly as a conductor. Then came the performance. And even today my heart beats faster when I think of it. I was barely seventeen years old, by far the youngest member of the orchestra. No instrument is as sensitive to the slightest clumsy handling as the trumpet. Down in the densely packed rows of the stalls, I saw my mother sitting, and next to her Adolf, who smiled at me encouragingly. Everything went well, and I reaped a good share of the thunderous applause for myself. In any case, Adolf applauded for me alone. There were tears in my mother's eyes.

After this successful debut, Adolf made it clear to me during a lonely night-time walk that I must do everything in my power to devote myself entirely to music. His urgent words are still as present to me as if they had been spoken to me only yesterday: "You must no longer remain a tapestry-maker. The business will bring you to your grave. (I had been seriously ill shortly before.) It does not suit you or your nature at all. You have very clearly defined talents, and not just as a soloist, that goes without saying, but as a conductor, whether as a concert or stage conductor. I observe you constantly in the theater; you already know the entire score before a single note is played. Music is your life's task. There you are in your element. That is where you belong." Adolf had now voiced what had been moving me for a long time. To become a conductor was for me the most beautiful and ideal goal in life that I could imagine.

That Adolf shared my view filled me with endless bliss. Our conversations turned ever more intensively toward this plan for the future, however relentlessly the hard, sober facts spoke against it: My father was sickly. I was his only son and had learned his trade in order to take over the business, which he had built up from small, arduous beginnings...

had brought up, to take over. All his hope, all his life energy was concentrated on being able to hand the business over to me in good condition. Even if, in contrast to Adolf's father, he did not try to push this decision through by force, he only made the break-off even harder for me. He hardly ever expressed his concern for me; but I felt all the more clearly how he clung to his life's work.

In this difficult inner conflict, Adolf proved himself to be a reliable friend. As decisively as he encouraged my inclination to choose music as a lifelong profession, he proceeded just as cleverly. For the first and only time, I discovered a quality in him that had previously remained unknown to me, and which I was unable to rediscover in him later: he had patience. He recognized quite correctly that a decision so essential for my father could not be pushed through simply by a determined onslaught. He recognized where the weak point lay at which he had to start the attack: my mother, in her natural devotion to music, was very receptive to his ideas, although she too knew how to estimate the costs of a music education very well. The path to the father went through the mother. Then perhaps only a clever pretext was needed, Adolf mused, to bring about a decision for me.

In all these difficult situations that Adolf and I had to fight through, the theater became more and more a place of inner edification for us. One must consider that at that time there was neither cinema nor radio, so that the possibility of receiving artistic impressions was still very unilaterally limited to the theater, which nowadays is only very much on the periphery for many people. For us, however, the theater stood unshakeably at the center. Everything that moved and occupied us revolved somehow around the theater. While I conducted the greatest theater orchestras in my imagination, Adolf built theater buildings of truly grandiose dimensions with even greater ingenuity.

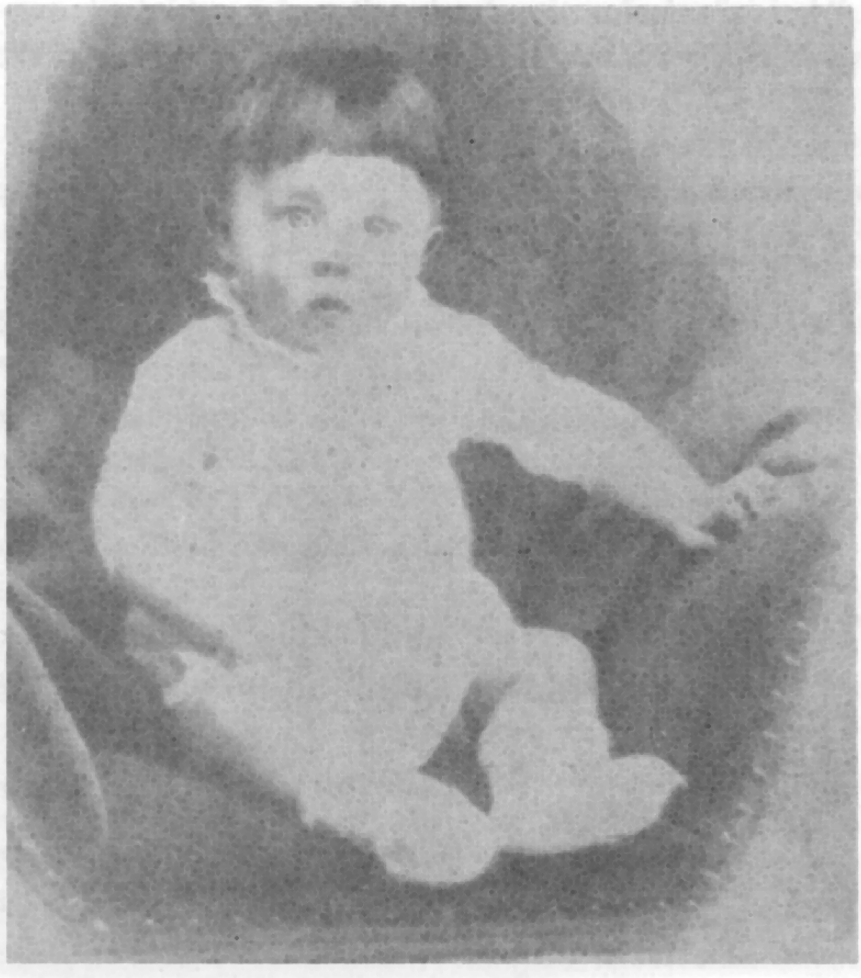
In addition, we had met on the venerable ground of the theater. Our friendship had grown out of a theater acquaintance. Thus, we sealed our friendship over and over again by the two columns in the standing stalls. I always felt my relationship with Adolf as an obligation that went beyond an ordinary childhood friendship, because it had received a special consecration through the place where we had met for the first time. This is no empty phrase; for in fact the friendship begun in this rather meager provincial theater was continued in the Vienna Opera and in the "Burg" and found its crowning glory in the sanctuary at Bayreuth, where I experienced the festival as a guest of the Reich Chancellor.

Hitler possessed a natural joy and passion for the theater. I am convinced that this so primal preference is connected with early childhood impressions, specifically with experiences during the Lambach years. I can no longer remember exactly whether he told me about the charming monastery stage of the Benedictines. My memory unfortunately fails me on this point. But I believe that closer investigation would yield valuable information; for without a doubt, the enthusiastic boy ran to every performance at the monastery. After all, as a choirboy, he had access everywhere. Perhaps he even played along once. This delicate Baroque stage, however, is a jewel of its kind. I could imagine no more beautiful beginning to a passion for theater than a boyishly fresh sung scene on this stage.

From Leonding, the twelve-year-old boy came into the Landestheater in Linz for the first time. Hitler himself reports on this.

"The Upper Austrian provincial capital possessed a relatively not-bad theater at that time. Pretty much everything was played. At twelve years old, I saw 'William Tell' there for the first time, and a few months later, the first opera of my life, 'Lohengrin.' In one stroke, I was captivated. The youthful enthusiasm for the Bayreuth Master knew no bounds. Again and again I was drawn to his works, and I feel it today as a particular stroke of luck that, through the modesty of the provincial performance, the possibility of a later intensification remained preserved for me."

Well said, very well said indeed! I would hardly have found such beautiful words in my judgment of the Linz Landestheater. Perhaps this is because I already felt like a future theater conductor and viewed everything, especially the orchestra, much more critically than he did. Probably, however, I lacked something of that intensive power of empathy which, despite the most obvious inadequacies, made it possible for him to surrender himself entirely to the illusion of a work. When we were at the theater, I often had the impression that he was able to experience the fundamental artistic content of the work directly, looking past the highly deficient rendition. Even a Lohengrin who, through the clumsiness of a stagehand, fell out of his boat and had to climb back into his swan-vehicle looking rather dusty from the "sea" into which he had fallen—not only did the audience laugh, Elsa laughed too!—could not destroy this illusion for him. What did these ridiculous things have to do with the lofty idea that the great Master had before his eyes when composing his "Lohengrin"? Despite this unusual ability to surrender to an illusion, Adolf was also, as far as the conditions at the theater were concerned, a hard, strict critic.



Very interesting picture of Adolf Hitler from Braunau.
I. Photograph, described in the book!

17. Whether assets are present, what they roughly consist of, (savings books also by name of the institution and number) in whose hands they are located and what arrangements have been made for their security; whether, at which institution and for whose benefit the deceased has entered into an insurance policy for the event of death;

The existing furnishings belonged to the father and were already included in the assessment of his estate. The funeral expenses were covered by the children.

Place and time of the death record:

Urfahr, on January 18, 1908

Signature of witnesses and parties:

Adolf Hitler

Signature of the court delegate:

J. Krabik

Last section of the probate certificate dated January 18, 1908.
Hitler's signature.

The Landestheater, or as it was still called then, the "Linzer landschaftliche Theater," was a venerable old building. The stage was far too small for the performance of Richard Wagner's music dramas and inadequate in every respect. The technical facilities necessary for a worthy presentation of these works were missing. Added to this was a severe lack of suitable costumes, and of inventory in general. The orchestra was far too understaffed and did not bring the intended tonal effects to bear at all. To give just one example, in a performance of "Die Meistersinger," many instruments were not staffed at all. I already noted "professionally" that the bass clarinet, the English horn, and the contrabassoon were missing in the woodwind group, as were the so-called Wagner tubas in the brass. The string section was also far too weak; the triple woodwind section could not be staffed at all. Even if the necessary instrumentalists had been available, there would not have been enough room in the far too cramped orchestra pit to accommodate them. Truly pitiful conditions for the responsible conductor! Attempting a Wagner performance with twenty men in the orchestra remained a risky undertaking in any case. The choir was similarly understaffed and also presented an unpleasant sight. Not only were the costumes usually very ill-fitting, but the choir also expected a lot from the audience in other ways—for instance, when in "Die Meistersinger" the male choir assistants wore English-style trimmed mustaches, which once outraged Adolf beyond measure. The soloists were not exactly bad for a provincial stage. However, there were only a few real Wagner singers among them.

There was a constant complaint about the stage design. The painted backdrops wobbled with every step, even when they were supposed to represent a rocky landscape. When I think of the "Fire in the Capitol," with which "Rienzi" concludes, it still sends a shiver down my spine today. In the center of the scene stood the palazzo with a built-out balcony. Rienzi and Irene stepped forward to appease the excited crowd. To the right and left of the two, two timid little rosin flames were noticeable, which were intended to represent the breaking fire. Now, a stagehand had to lower a backdrop on which the palazzo, standing in bright flames, was painted. This backdrop got stuck on one side with the weight bar on the fly floor. When they tried to loosen the bar, the entire backdrop rattled to the floor. One always had to expect such and similar incidents. It is very nice when Hitler says that these "modest" performances kept open for us the possibility of an increase, which we received in abundance at the Vienna Court Opera. But nevertheless, I am amazed today that an illusion was possible at all back then with these completely inadequate performances and that we were enthusiastic and could be carried away. The idealism, the receptivity of young hearts, mocked all the pitfalls of the object.

At Wagner performances, the theater was always sold out. One often had to queue for one or two hours to gain admission if one wanted to fight for a "pillar" in the standing area of the stalls. The intermissions lasted forever. When we, glowing with enthusiasm, urgently needed to cool down, an old, white-bearded theater attendant would sell us a glass of water, while Adolf and I took turns securing our conquered spots. One would then place a kreuzer in the emptied glass and hand it back to the attendant. Often the performance did not end until midnight. Then I would accompany Adolf home. But the way was too short to work off the powerful impressions of the evening. Adolf would accompany me back to Klammstraße. But now he was only just beginning to get truly enthusiastic. So we strolled back together once more to Humboldtstraße. I do not remember Adolf ever getting tired. In general, the night had a stimulating effect on him. In return, even then, he could do little with even the most beautiful morning. It happened that after such a performance we would oscillate back and forth between Humboldt- and Klammstraße until I began to yawn and my eyes would close in the open square.

From his earliest youth, Adolf had intoxicated himself with the tales from German heroic legends. As a boy, he could never hear enough of them. Again and again, he reached for the well-known book by Gustav Schwab, which presents the legendary world of early German history in a popular form. This book was his favorite reading. In Humboldtstraße, this book had a preferred place in his study, so that he always had it ready at hand. When he lay ill, he immersed himself with true fervor in the mysterious mythical world that this book had opened up to him. I remember that Adolf even possessed a particularly beautiful edition of the German heroic legends in our Vienna student digs, which he read often and eagerly, although he was already occupied with very current problems at that time. Familiarity with the German legendary world was therefore by no means, as is usually the case, just a youthful infatuation. Rather, it was the material that most captivated him even in his historical and political reflections and never let him go, the world to which he felt he belonged. He could not imagine his own life more beautifully than he found it depicted in the shining heroic figures of the early German period. Again and again, he identified himself with the great men of that sunken world. Nothing seemed more desirable to him than, after a life full of bold, far-reaching deeds, a life as heroic as possible, to enter Valhalla and become a mythical figure for all time.

become, similar to those he himself so deeply revered. One should not overlook this peculiar, romantic perspective in Adolf Hitler's life, even if the harsh sense of reality that determines his politics must relegate such transfigured youthful dreams to the realm of fantasy. The fact remains despite everything that throughout his life Adolf Hitler found no other ground on which he could dwell in almost pious devotion than that to which the German heroic saga had opened the gate for him.

In conflict with a bourgeois world that had nothing to offer him in its mendacity and false hypocrisy, he instinctively sought his own world and found it in the origin and early days of his own people. This long-sunken epoch, which can only be inadequately illuminated historically, became a full-blooded, fulfilled present in his impetuous nature. Dreams became realities. With his characteristic imagination, which transformed everything, he lived himself into the dawn of the German people, which he perceived as the most beautiful epoch of the German people. He experienced this time, dating back more than fifteen hundred years, with such intensity that I myself, coming straight from sober everyday life, sometimes clutched my head in disbelief. Did he really live among heroes of the grey past, of whom he spoke so vividly as if they were still present in the woods through which we wandered at night? Was the dawning twentieth century, in which we actually lived, only a slightly beautiful, strange dream to him? His way of swapping dream and reality and summarily overturning the millennia sometimes caused a fear to rise within me that my friend would one day no longer find his way in the confusion he himself had created.

The constant and intensive preoccupation with the German heroic saga created in him a unique susceptibility to the life's work of Richard Wagner. Even as a twelve-year-old, when he had heard "Lohengrin," this work must have appeared to him like a realization of the boyish longing for the sublime world of the German past. Who was the man who created such greatness and transformed his boyhood dreams into poetry and music? From the hour Richard Wagner entered his life, the genius of this man never let him go. In Richard Wagner's life and work, he saw not only a confirmation of the path he himself had taken with his spiritual "relocation" into the German past; rather, Wagner's work strengthened him in the view that this long-vanished epoch could be made useful for the present—indeed, that just as it became the home of his art for Richard Wagner, it could become the home of his will for him.

In the years of my friendship with Adolf Hitler, I witnessed the first phase of this development that fulfilled his entire life. With

With incredible tenacity and consistency, he made the work and the life of this man his own; I had never experienced anything like it. As an enthusiastic musician, I also had my great role models whom I strove to emulate. But what my friend sought in Richard Wagner was much more than just a role model and example. I can only say: he appropriated the personality of Richard Wagner, indeed, he acquired him so completely for himself as if he could become a part of his own being.

With a feverish heart, he read everything he could obtain about this master, the good as well as the bad, the supportive as well as the dismissive. In particular, he procured biographical literature about Richard Wagner wherever he could, read his notes, letters, diaries, his self-portrayal, his confessions. He penetrated deeper and deeper into the life of this man. He was knowledgeable even about apparently secondary and trivial episodes. It could happen that Adolf would suddenly stop during our walks and abruptly break off the topic that had just been occupying him—for instance, the supply of underperforming provincial theaters with the inventory necessary for good performances from a state fund made available for loan on a case-by-case basis—to recite to me from memory the text of a letter or a note by Richard Wagner, or read aloud to me one of his writings, for example, "The Artwork of the Future" or "Art and Revolution." Although it was not always easy for me to follow these explanations, I listened attentively; for I was already looking forward to the conclusion, which was always the same. "You see," it was then said, "it happened to Richard Wagner just as it did to me. Throughout his life, he had to fight against the lack of understanding of his environment."

To me, these comparisons seemed greatly exaggerated: after all, Richard Wagner had lived for seventy years. In such a productive life, there were naturally highs and lows, successes and disappointments. But my friend, who was drawing a parallel between his own life and the life of Richard Wagner, was only seventeen years old, had created nothing yet but a few drawings, watercolors, and plans, and had experienced nothing but the death of his father and failure in school. Yet he spoke as if he already had persecution, exhausting struggle, and exile behind him.

With true fervor, he repeatedly visualized decisive episodes from the life of the great master, which also became familiar to me over time. He described Richard Wagner's stormy voyage with his young wife through the Skagerrak, during which the idea of "The Flying Dutchman" was born. I experienced the adventurous flight of the young revolutionary, the years of proscription, the exile. Together with my friend, I grew enthusiastic about the royal patronage of Ludwig II and accompanied the lonely Master on his last journey to Venice. Not that Adolf had closed himself off from Richard Wagner's human weaknesses, his extravagance for instance. But he forgave them in view of the immortal greatness of his work.

At that time, Richard Wagner had already been dead for more than twenty years. But the struggle for the recognition of his work was still in full swing. Today, one can hardly imagine the passion with which the art-loving youth of that time participated in that controversy. For us, people were divided into only two categories: friends and enemies of Richard Wagner. When I observe the dispute over certain phenomena in modern music today and see the subdued zeal of those involved, I can only smile pityingly. What harmless activity this is compared to the rough struggle we waged for Richard Wagner, although nowadays, through radio and tape recordings, much broader layers of the population can be involved in the controversy in the field of music.

We all stood in the midst of the most bitter struggle. When a Wagner performance was in sight, a mood took hold of us like that of the heroes on stage. We looked for ever new means to express our unreserved approval, our enthusiasm, our excitement. In August Göllerich, who himself had worked under Richard Wagner, we found not only a worthy interpreter of the great Master's art but also a designated guardian of his legacy. In our eyes, he was the keeper of the Grail.

We were convinced that in this struggle for Richard Wagner's work, we were witnessing the birth of a new German art. The music drama, as the genius of this man had created it, was something completely new, hardly suspected before. Without a visible model, without example, Richard Wagner had for the first time realized the unity of poetry and music. Only the fundamentally new means of expression enabled him to place his works in a mythical world that had long since become our own.

Adolf knew no greater longing than to come one day to Bayreuth, the national place of pilgrimage for Germans, to see House Wahnfried, to linger at the Master's grave, and to experience the performance of his works in the festival house he had created. Even if many dreams and wishes of his life remained unfulfilled, this wish was fulfilled in unparalleled perfection.

Happy memories that move me, an old man of sixty-four! But the memory makes the old heart glad again and...

young. After all, it is the same heart that beat so stormily for the Bayreuth Master back then. I am happy that I witnessed this first phase of Adolf Hitler's ecstatic enthusiasm for Richard Wagner. I would not want to miss these experiences of my youth. While I was merely a good friend in Adolf's relationship with Stefanie, one who had to report observations and gather information, I was much more involved in this relationship; for as the one who was musically better and more thoroughly prepared, I also had a significant word to say in this case. Adolf certainly brought me much closer to the secret of his love for Stefanie; for nothing forges a friendship so firmly together as a shared secret. But this youth-bond only experienced its highest consecration through the shared veneration of Richard Wagner.

THE YOUNG NATIONALIST

Since this concerns the representation of the political thoughts and ideas of the young Hitler, I can hear his voice clearly in my ear at this very moment: "You don't understand that!" or "One cannot talk to you about that!", sometimes even sharper, for instance, when I nodded approvingly at a certain point during his political explanations instead of falling into indignation as he had expected: "Politically, Gustl, you are a blockhead!"

Only one thing in life was important to me: music. Adolf certainly agreed with me that art should take precedence over all areas of life. But in the course of the years spent together, political interests gradually gained the upper hand, though without him neglecting his artistic endeavors because of it. One could perhaps formulate it like this: The Linz years were marked by art, the subsequent Vienna years by politics. I felt very well that I could only mean something to him in artistic matters. The more emphatically he became interested in politics, the less our friendship could give him. Not that he would have let me feel this. He took friendship far too seriously for that, and besides, he was perhaps not even clearly enough aware of this fact.

Politics had always been the critical point of our relationship. Since I possessed hardly any views of my own in the political field and, where these existed, felt in no way prompted to defend these views or even to force them upon others, Adolf had a poor partner in me. He would have much preferred to convert me than to persuade me. I, however, took in everything he presented readily and uncritically; I also remembered many things, so that every now and then I could join in the conversation quite skillfully. But it was not enough for a contradiction, which he might have needed at times; for political matters simply found no ground in me. I stood before it like a deaf-mute before a symphony orchestra, who sees that playing is going on but hears nothing. I simply lacked the organ to absorb the political.

This could drive Adolf to despair. He considered it impossible that there could be such a specimen of a human being on this earth, so untouched by all politics as I was. He certainly did not...

spared. I remember how he repeatedly forced me in Vienna to accompany him to Parliament. I really had no business there and would have much preferred to sit at the grand piano in the meantime. But Adolf would not hear of it. I had to go with him, even though he knew exactly that this parliamentary business always bored me terribly. But woe to me if I had expressed that openly.

It is usually assumed that politicians come from a politically high-tension environment. This is by no means true for my friend. On the contrary! Here again, one of the contradictions so frequent in Hitler reveals itself. The father was not averse to talking politics and made no secret of his liberal views. But he commanded an energetic halt whenever a word was spoken against the Imperial House. The old k. u. k. (Imperial and Royal) senior customs official strictly observed that boundary. When he put on his parade uniform on the eighteenth of August, the Emperor's birthday, he was from head to toe the model of a loyal civil servant. Little Adolf probably heard very little about politics from his father's mouth; for in the father's opinion, politics did not belong in the family, but in the tavern. No matter how heated things got at the "Bürgertisch" (citizens' table), nothing of it was felt at home. I also cannot remember Adolf ever particularly referring to his father regarding his own political views.

Even less of it was felt in the quiet home on Humboldtstraße. Adolf's mother was a simple, pious woman to whom politics was completely foreign. Earlier, when the father was still alive, she had probably heard him blustering about political conditions in front of others now and then, but she never adopted any of it herself or passed it on to the children. To the father, in his choleric nature, it was perhaps acceptable that what he championed loudly outside at the citizens' table was dampened by his quiet wife and hardly touched the domesticity. So it remained thereafter. No one associated with the family who would have brought politics into it. I do not remember ever hearing political conversations at Mrs. Hitler's. Even when a certain political event in the city caused the most violent waves, nothing of it was felt in this quiet home; for Adolf, too, remained silent about such things at home. There, life continued in a calm regularity. The only change I experienced in the Hitler family was that Mrs. Klara moved from Humboldtstraße to Urfahr at the end of 1906. However, the father's restless temperament was no longer a factor in this; rather, a purely practical consideration was decisive. Urfahr, long since united with Linz, was at that time still its own municipality with a predominantly rural character, a preferred residence for retirees and pensioners. After...

Since no consumption tax was levied in Urfahr, many things, for example meat, were cheaper there than in the city. Frau Klara hoped to get by better in Urfahr with her modest pension of one hundred and forty crowns—ninety crowns for herself, and twenty-five crowns each for Adolf and Paula. She was also happy to see meadows and fields around her again. The quiet house at Blütengasse 9 has remained so unchanged that sometimes, when I walk through this secluded alley, behind which the greenery already lies, I think I see Frau Klara on the small, delicate balcony. For Adolf, it was a special feeling of elation to live "on the same shore" as Stefanie. Our evening walk home became even longer due to the move to Urfahr. This was entirely to our liking; for the questions and problems that moved us had also become more fruitful and lasting. The way across the bridge was sometimes too short for us, so that when a problem particularly occupied us, we had to walk back and forth across the Danube several times to finish the conversation. More precisely: Adolf needed the time for talking, I for listening.

When I think of this quiet home in which Adolf grew up, and visualize the political ideas and tasks that pressed upon him from all sides, I am involuntarily reminded of that strange law of nature which allows a space of complete calm to arise in the center of a raging hurricane, whose peace and stability are all the deeper the more violently the storm rages all around.

When considering the political development of such an unusual person as Adolf Hitler was, one must separate external influences from internal dispositions, for in my opinion, the latter are of much higher significance than the events pressing in from the outside. After all, many young people at that time had the same teachers as Adolf, experienced the same political processes, were enthusiastic or indignant about them, and yet these people nevertheless only became capable merchants, engineers, or manufacturers and remained politically insignificant.

The atmosphere at the Linz Realschule was decidedly nationalistic. The class secretly opposed all traditional institutions, such as patriotic performances, dynastic demonstrations and festivals, against school religious services and Corpus Christi processions. Adolf Hitler characterized this atmosphere, which was much more important to him than the teaching operations, in his book as follows:

> "Collections were made there for the Südmark and the School Association, convictions were emphasized through cornflowers and black-red-gold colors, greeted with 'Heil', and instead of the Imperial Anthem, 'Deutschland über alles' was preferred, despite warnings and punishments."

The struggle for the existence of the German ethnic group in the Danube state moved young minds at that time; understandably so, for this Austrian Germandom stood alone in the midst of the Slavic, Magyar, and Italian nations of Austria-Hungary. Linz, however, was far from the ethnic border and was a core German city. But from neighboring Bohemia, unrest constantly flowed in. In Prague, one riot followed another. The fact that the entire Imperial and Royal (k. u. k.) police were nevertheless unable to protect German houses from the Czech mob, so that in the midst of peace a state of siege had to be declared over Prague, triggered indignation in Linz as well. Budweis was still a German city at that time with a German administration and a German city council majority. The classmates of Adolf, who came from Prague, Budweis, or Prachatitz, wept with rage when they were jokingly called "Bohemians"; for they only wanted to be Germans like the others. Gradually, it even began to become restless in Linz. A few hundred Czechs lived here as quiet, modest workers and craftsmen, about whom no one until then, least of all themselves, would have made a special fuss. Now, a Czech Capuchin father named Jurasek founded a Sokol club in Linz, held sermons in the Czech language in St. Martin's Church on the Römerberg, and collected contributions for the establishment of a Czech school. This caused a great sensation in the city, and nationalistic minds saw in the action of the fanatical Capuchin the preparation for a Czech invasion. That was, of course, exaggerated. Nevertheless, it was precisely this Czech activity at that time that gave the somewhat sleepy residents of Linz the feeling of being threatened, and so they stood unanimously as fellow combatants in the ethnic struggle raging all around.

"Whoever knows the soul of youth will be able to understand that it is precisely they who most joyfully open their ears to such a struggle. In a hundred different forms they then tend to wage this struggle, in their own way and with their own weapons... They are thus a faithful reflection of the great in miniature, only often in a better and more sincere disposition."

So Adolf Hitler certainly continues to report very accurately, just as one can generally rely on "Mein Kampf" in the description of external political developments. The national-minded teachers at the Realschule were at the forefront of this defensive struggle. Doctor Leopold Pötsch, the history teacher, was an active politician. As a representative in the city council, he was the leading head of the German National faction. He hated the Habsburg multi-ethnic state, which today— what a change— appears to us almost as a model of a supranational union, and gave the youth, who were enthusiastic about everything national, their political slogans.

"Who, finally, could still maintain loyalty to the Emperor toward a dynasty," who in the past and present have betrayed the interests of the German people again and again, shamefully, for the sake of their own advantage?"

With that, for the sake of a Pan-German program, the son had finally and irrevocably left the path of his father.

When Adolf lost himself deeper and deeper in these lines of thought during excited conversations—I myself could hardly keep up with listening, let alone with my most modest participation—I noticed a word that regularly recurred in such discussions: "The Reich!" This word always stood at the end of long chains of thought. If he reached a dead end with a political consideration and did not immediately know how to proceed, he would simply say: "The Reich will solve this question." When I asked who would finance all these gigantic buildings he was designing on the drawing board, the answer was: "The Reich." But even trivial things were always projected onto the "Reich." The inadequate equipment of provincial theaters was to be reformed by a "Reich Stage Designer." (As is well known, after 1933 there really was a man who held this title. I remember that Adolf Hitler coined this expression back then in Linz—as a sixteen- or seventeen-year-old!) Even blind welfare or the animal protection society became, in his eyes, institutions of the "Reich."

In Austria, "Reich" usually refers to the territory of the German Reich. The inhabitants of this state are referred to here as "Reichsdeutsche." But when my friend used the word "Reich," he meant more than just the German state. To be sure, he avoided defining the term more precisely; for in this word "Reich," everything that moved him politically had to find space, and that was a great deal.

Just as vehemently as he loved the German people and this "Reich," he rejected everything foreign. He had no need to get to know foreign countries. That urge to travel, so typical for young, cosmopolitan people, was completely unknown to him. I also never noticed in him the enthusiasm for Italy so typical for artists. When he projected his plans and ideas onto a specific country, it was always only the "Reich."

In this stormy national struggle, which was clearly directed against the Austrian monarchy, the unusual talents inherent in his nature began to unfold. Above all, the iron consistency with which he held onto what he had once considered right. National ideology moved as a political confession into the "unalterable realm" of his being. No failure, no setback deterred him from it. He remained until his death what he already was at sixteen: a nationalist.

With this immovable goal before his eyes, he viewed and examined the...

existing political conditions. Nothing was incidental to him. Even the seemingly most insignificant matter occupied him. He took a stand on everything; the less it concerned him, the more vehemently he did so. He compensated for the complete insignificance of his existence by taking all the more decisive positions on all public questions. The urge to change everything in existence thus gained direction and purpose. After all, with his being involved in everything, so much stood in his way! Everywhere he saw only inhibition and obstacles; everyone misunderstood him. Yet, no one even knew of him. Often I downright pitied him. How beautiful he could have made life for himself with his indubitable talent, but how difficult he made it for himself! He was constantly bumping into things and was at odds with the whole world. Precisely that healthy lightheartedness that characterizes young people was entirely foreign to him. I never experienced him brushing anything aside with a light hand. Every matter had to be understood to its very core and then tested to see how it would fit into the great political goal he had set for himself. Tradition meant little to him, politically speaking. In short: the world had to be changed fundamentally and in all its parts.

However, anyone who would conclude from this description that the young Hitler had plunged into daily politics with flying colors is mistaken. A pale, sickly, tall-grown youth, completely unknown to the people and inexperienced in the city, rather reserved and shy than obtrusive, pursues this intensive preoccupation entirely by himself. Only the most important ideas and solutions he has found, ideas that absolutely need an audience, does he present in the evenings to me—that is, to an equally insignificant and solitary person. The young Hitler's relationship to politics is similar to his relationship to love—forgive me for this not very tasteful comparison. As intensely as politics occupied him mentally, he actually kept himself just as intensely away from practical political activity. He joins no party, attaches himself to no organization, does not participate in party-style demonstrations, and is careful not to carry his own thoughts beyond the narrow circle of his friendship. What I experienced of him in Linz at that time, I would like to call, to stay with the metaphor, a first "exchange of glances" with politics, nothing more, as if he had already sensed then what politics would one day mean to him.

Politics remained for him at first only a task in the intellectual sphere. In this striking restraint, a fundamental trait of his nature reveals itself, which seemed to contradict his impatience: the ability to be able to wait. For years, politics remained for him a matter of observation, of criticism of social conditions, of testing, of gathering experience, remained a completely private and therefore, for the public life of that time, an entirely insignificant matter.

It is an interesting fact that the young Hitler sharply rejected military matters in those years. A passage in "Mein Kampf" seems to contradict this: "While rummaging through my father's library, I had come across various books of a military nature, including a popular edition of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71. They were two volumes of an illustrated periodical from those years, which now became my favorite reading. It did not take long before the great heroic struggle had become my greatest inner experience. From then on, I raved more and more for everything that was somehow connected with war or at least with soldiering."

I suspect that this memory was only brought about by the special situation during the Landsberg imprisonment, where this book was written; for when I met Adolf Hitler, he wanted to know nothing at all about "anything that was somehow connected with war or at least with soldiering." Of course, the lieutenants strolling with Stefanie bothered him greatly. But his aversion sat deeper. The mere idea of military compulsion could incense him. No, he would never let himself be forced to become a soldier. If he did become one, it would be by his own free decision and never in the Austrian army.

Before I close the chapter on Adolf Hitler's political development, I would like to pick out two questions that seem more essential to me than anything else that can be said about politics: the position of the young Hitler toward Judaism and the Church.

Adolf Hitler himself provides information about his behavior toward the problem of Judaism during his Linz years:

"It is difficult for me today, if not impossible, to say when the word 'Jew' first gave me cause for special thoughts. In my father's house, I do not remember even hearing the word during my father's lifetime. I believe the old gentleman would have seen a cultural backwardness in the mere special emphasis of this designation. In the course of his life, he had arrived at more or less cosmopolitan views, which, despite a most abrupt national sentiment, had not only been maintained but also rubbed off on me. In school, too, I found no occasion that could have led to a change in this inherited image.

In the Realschule, I did get to know a Jewish boy who was treated with caution by all of us, but only because we did not particularly trust him regarding his discretion, having been made wise by various experiences; no other thought occurred to me any more than to the others."

It was only in my fourteenth or fifteenth year that I frequently came across the word Jew, partly in connection with political conversations. I felt a slight aversion to it and could not help an uncomfortable feeling that always crept over me when denominational bickering was carried out in my presence.

At that time, however, I did not see the question as anything else. Linz had only very few Jews..."

This all sounds very plausible, but it does not quite agree with my memories.

First of all, the image of the father already seemed to me to have been corrected in favor of a liberal view. The regulars' table in Leonding, which he frequented, was sworn to the ideas of Schönerer. Thus, the father certainly already decisively rejected Judaism.

In the description of the school years, it is concealed that there were teachers at the Realschule with decidedly anti-Semitic attitudes, who openly confessed their hatred of Jews even before the students. Even as a Realschule student, Hitler must therefore have sensed something of the political aspects of the Jewish question. I cannot imagine it any other way; for when I met Adolf Hitler, he was already decidedly anti-Semitic. I remember exactly how once, as we were walking through Bethlehemstraße and passed the small synagogue, he said to me: "That does not belong in Linz."

According to my memory, Adolf Hitler had already come to Vienna as a pronounced anti-Semite. He did not need to become one first, although the experiences in Vienna made him think even more radically about these questions than before.

The tendency underlying Adolf Hitler's self-portrayal is, in my opinion, this: Even in Linz, where the Jews played no role, this question was not a matter of indifference to him. It was only in Vienna that he was forced by the large number of Jews to occupy himself with this question.

Things are somewhat different in the ecclesiastical field. In "Mein Kampf" there is hardly any biographical information on this, except for a description of childhood experiences in Lambach:

> "Since I received singing lessons in the monastery of the Canons Regular at Lambach in my spare time, I had the best opportunity to intoxicate myself again and again with the solemn pomp of the extremely brilliant church festivals. What was more natural than that, just as the little village priest had once appeared to my father, the Lord Abbot now appeared to me as the most desirable ideal. At least at times, this was the case."

Hitler's ancestors were certainly pious, church-believing people, as is a matter of course for farmers. The Hitler family was in this ambivalent in this respect: the mother pious, faithfully devoted to the Church, the father liberal, a lukewarm Christian. Certainly, ecclesiastical questions were closer to the father than the Jewish problem. As a civil servant, he could not afford to be openly anti-clerical given the close connection between Throne and Altar.

As long as little Adolf remained near his mother, he was entirely a child after her own heart, pious and open to all the greatness and beauty that the Church offered. The small, pale choirboy was at that time completely absorbed in pious church faith. As little as Hitler says about it, these words, which conceal more than they say, mean a great deal. The magnificent monastery had become familiar to him. He felt attracted to the Church with childlike receptivity. His mother certainly encouraged him on this path.

The more he approached his father in the coming years, the further this childhood experience moved away from him, the more the liberal attitude of the father gained the upper hand. The school in Linz did the rest in this regard. Franz Sales Schwarz, the religion teacher at the Realschule, was little suited to influence this youth. The students did not take him seriously!

My own memories of this can be stated in a few sentences: As long as I knew Adolf Hitler, I do not remember him attending a church service. He knew that I went to church every Sunday with my parents, and took that as a given fact. He did not try to dissuade me from it, though he would say now and then that he could not quite understand this about me, as his mother was also a pious woman, yet he would not let himself be forced to church by her. But such words were always spoken by him only in passing, with a certain indulgence and tolerance that was otherwise certainly not to be observed in him. But in this case, he apparently was not concerned at all with asserting his personal view. I cannot recall that Adolf, when he picked me up on Sundays after the end of the service at the Carmelite Church, ever spoke disparagingly about this Sunday churchgoing, much less any kind of improper behavior from him. To my astonishment, he did not even make a matter of dispute out of this contradictory situation.

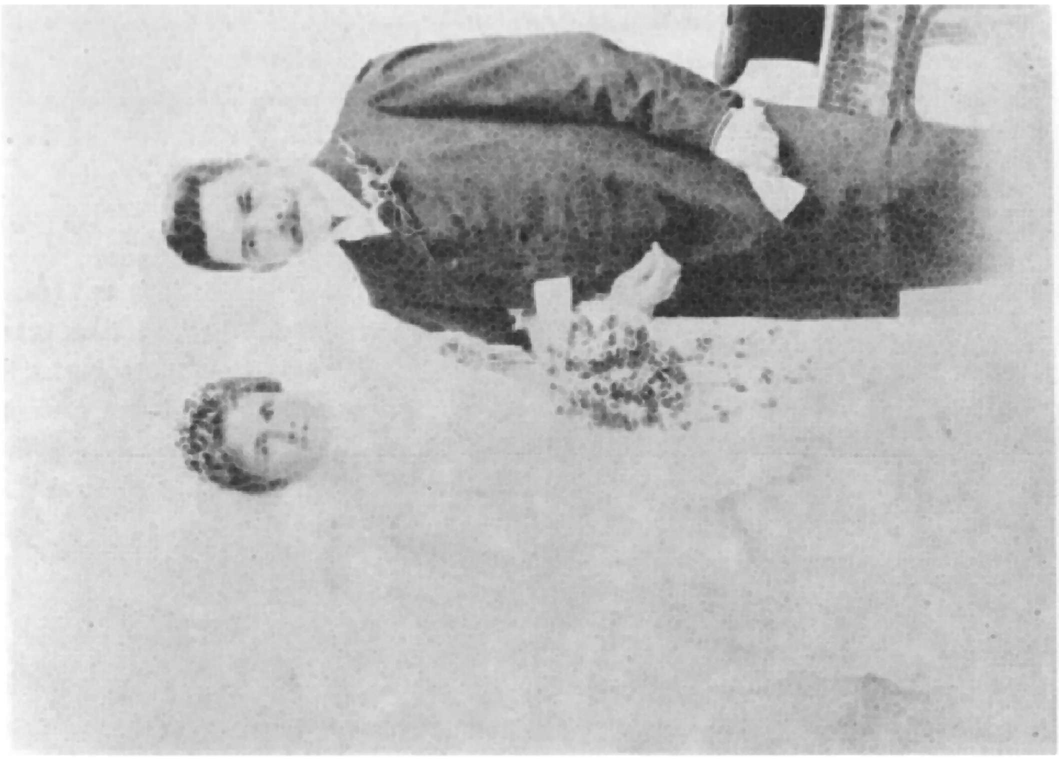
But one day he came to me very excited and showed me a book about witch trials, another time one about the Inquisition. But for all the indignation over the events described in these books, he avoided attaching political demands to them. Perhaps in this case I was not the right audience for him.

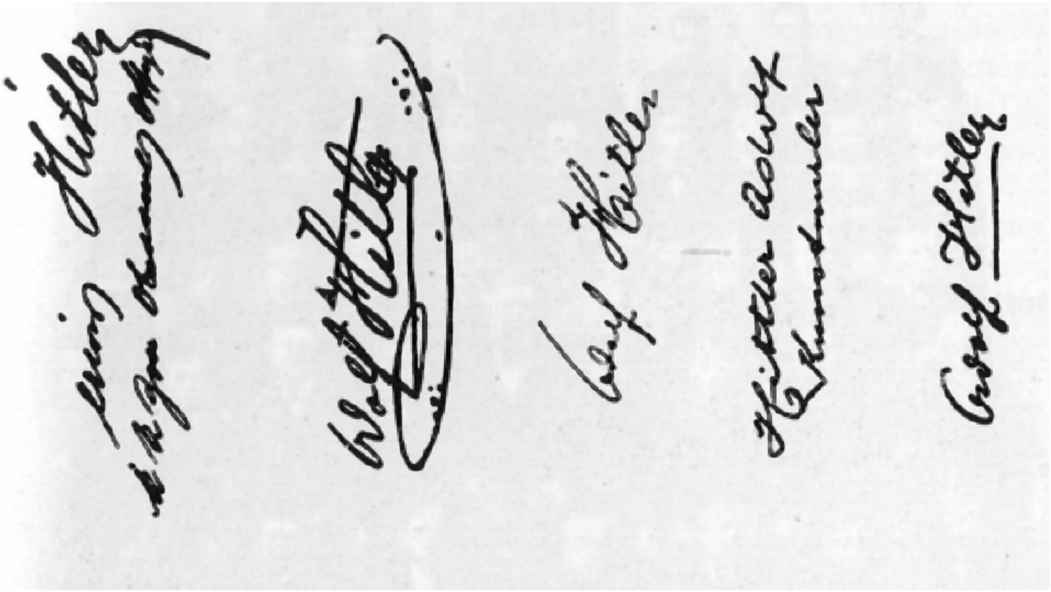
His mother always went to Mass on Sunday with little Paula. I cannot recall Adolf ever having accompanied his mother to church, nor that Frau Klara ever made representations to him because of it.

would have made. As pious and devout as she herself was, she had apparently resigned herself to the fact that her son was embarking on a different path. Perhaps in this case, the differently oriented behavior of the father also stood in her way, whose model and example remained decisive for her influence on the son.

In summary, I can formulate Hitler's attitude toward the Church at that time as follows: by no means was the Church a matter of indifference to him, but it had nothing to give him.

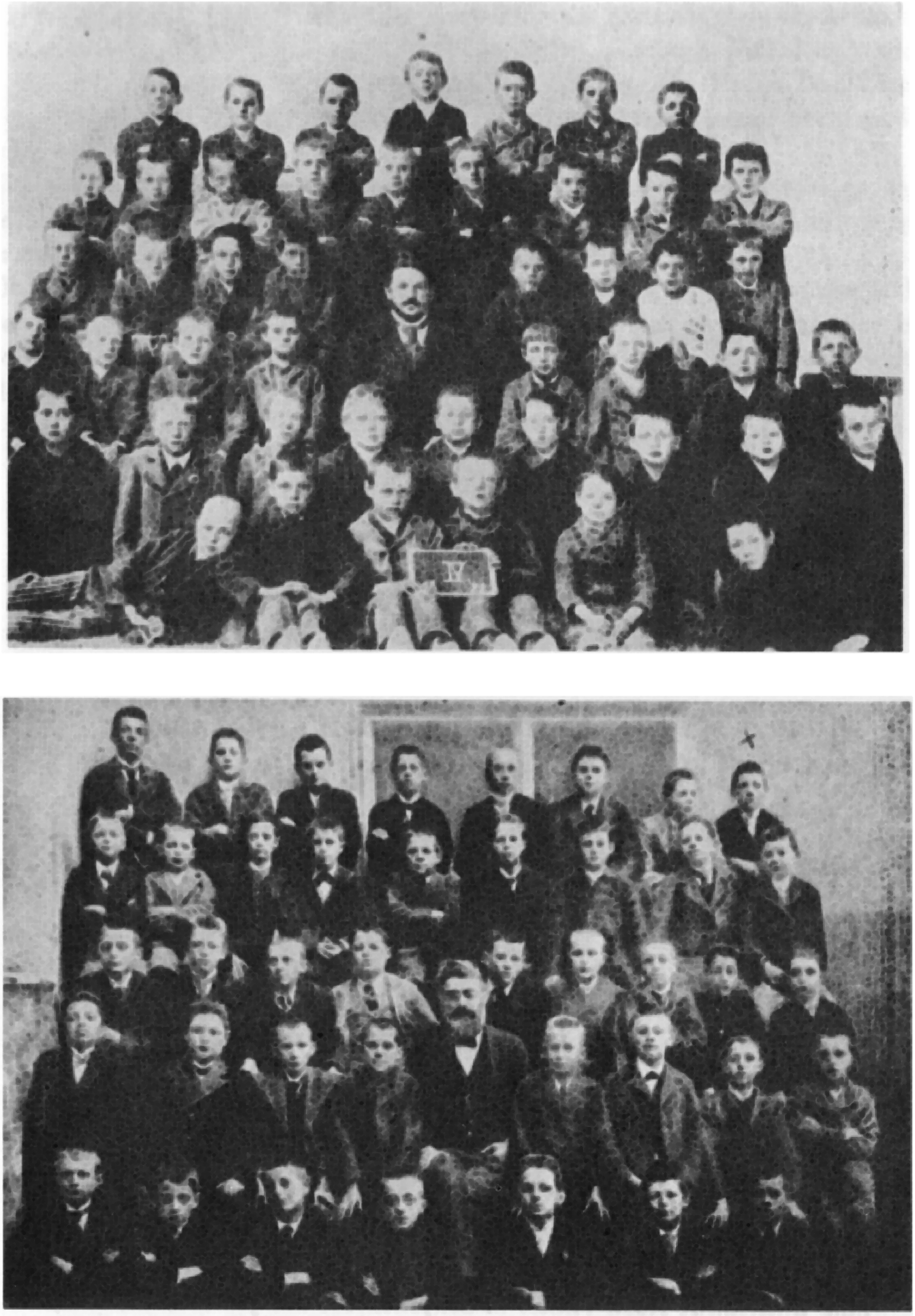
Looking back, it can therefore be said: Adolf Hitler became a nationalist. I experienced the unconditional devotion with which he dedicated himself to the people he loved, even back then. He lived for these people alone. He knew nothing other than these people.





Signature of the father, **Alois Hitler**, followed by the strikingly similar signature of Adolf Hitler in examples from the years 1906, 1907, 1913, and 1914

Wedding photo of Hitler's half-sister, **Angela Raubal**, whose husband became an adversary of the young Hitler



The student Adolf Hitler. Above, a photograph from the fourth grade of the elementary school in Leonding; below, a picture from the first grade of the Linz Realschule. Hitler in the first picture top center, in the second top right.

DRAWING, PAINTING, BUILDING

I knew this much soon after our first meeting: this young man had dedicated his life to art. Somehow, that which occupied him with such urgency pressed for artistic expression; for merely talking about it was not enough. For a long time, however, I could not become clear as to where his artistic aptitude lay.

At that time, when I had met him at the Landestheater, I believed he was devoted to music just as I was, for he spoke with astonishing certainty about musical questions. Secretly, I thought, he might be composing. But when he then read to me for the first time poems he had written himself, my view changed, as I had never before experienced someone making poems. I myself was miles away from such attempts. Therefore, this art seemed all the greater to me. Unfortunately, as far as I know, none of these poems have been preserved. I only know that the impression these verses, spoken with glowing enthusiasm, made on me was powerful, and this art impressed me immensely. I hardly possessed a judgment of my own on these matters. After all, I was only a paperhanger and had other things on my mind than making poems. I suspect that this poetry also meant only the awkward rhyming of a young person and that these poetic verses in truth had no greater significance.

While I was thus still undecided whether I should rank my friend among the significant musicians or among the coming poets, he surprised me with the declaration that he wanted to become a painter. I immediately remembered that I had often seen him drawing at home, but also when he was out with me. In the course of our friendship, however, I became acquainted with several of his works. As a paperhanger who had learned his trade, I sometimes had to sketch things myself. That always caused me great effort. I was all the more amazed at how easily these things came to my friend. Wherever we stayed, he always had the most varied papers with him. A pencil was whipped out. The beginning — that had always been the hardest part for me! With him, it was the other way around. The beginning was, so to speak, finished before he set the pencil down. In bold strokes, what he wanted to express flew onto the paper. What he could not make clear enough with words, he set...

the pencil continued. There was something charming about these first, dashed-off strokes. Every time it delighted me how a specific structure grew out of a tangle of crossing and intersecting lines. The execution itself gave him much less pleasure.

When I visited him for the first time in his study, I saw sketches, drawings, and designs everywhere. "The New State Theater" it said there, or the "Mountain Hotel on the Lichtenberg." It seemed to me as if I had stumbled into an architectural office. When I then saw him working at the drawing board—different from moments of happy inspiration, much more careful now, more precise and going into detail—I was convinced that he had already acquired all the technical and professional knowledge necessary for his work. After all, I myself had three years of hard apprenticeship behind me and knew that nothing in life is given for free and how laboriously such skill must be acquired. I simply did not think it possible that one could set down such difficult things off the cuff, and for a long time I did not believe that everything I saw was merely improvised.

There are so many of these works that one can form an accurate picture of Adolf Hitler's talent. First, there is a watercolor. The term watercolor does not quite hit the mark. It is a simple pencil drawing colored with tempera paints. Precisely that rapid capturing of an atmosphere, of a certain mood, so typical for watercolor painting—that airy, delicate quality that even in the finished work still reveals something of the fresh breath of the water used—is completely lacking in Adolf Hitler's watercolor. Precisely here, where he should have worked quickly and intuitively, he painted with meticulous precision.

Like everything I have to contribute in the field of Adolf Hitler's artistic activity, the one watercolor I own by him is to be classified among his first attempts. It is still very awkward, impersonal, and truly primitive. Yet perhaps therein lies its special charm. It depicts the Pöstlingberg, the landmark of Linz, in bold colors. I still remember well how Hitler gave me this sketch.

One should not expect any artistic insights from this first watercolor and the hundreds that followed it. He did not want to express something that moved him, but only to paint pleasing little pictures. Mostly he also chose popular subjects for this, preferably architecture, only rarely landscape. If the man who painted these postcards and pictures were not Hitler himself, no one would care about these works.

It is different with his drawings. Unfortunately, only a few have been preserved.

My own contribution to this is more than modest. Although I owned several of these hand drawings at the time, only a single one has remained with me, and a pure architectural drawing at that, which says little. It is the ink drawing of a villa on the Gugl, Stockbauerstraße 7. Adolf liked this then newly built villa very much. He drew it and gave me the sheet. Nothing more than his preference for architecture can be gathered from it.

He wanted to become a painter, the fifteen-year-old had explained to me. This goal persisted during the Linz years more out of defiance than inclination. Yet even then, a strong urge toward architecture made itself felt in Hitler.

When I look back on the Linz years, I must state: painting was something for Hitler that he did not take all too seriously; it remained more or less an occupation that took place on the fringes of the path he had taken; painting was the play with a talent of which he was certain. Building, however, meant much more to him. His whole being stood behind what he built in his imagination. He was gripped by it to his very core. When a certain idea had seized him, he was as if possessed by it. Then nothing else existed for him anymore. He could forget time, sleep, hunger, everything over it. As exhausting as it was for me to follow him in this, these moments in particular have remained unforgettable to me. There he stood with me in front of the new cathedral, this pale, slender youth, with the first dark fuzz sprouting on his upper lip, in his meager salt-and-pepper suit, worn at the sleeves and collar, and fixed his gaze onto some architectural detail, analyzed style and expression, blamed or praised the execution, criticized the material, all this with such thoroughness, such expertise, as if he were the client and had to pay for every negligence in execution out of his own pocket. Then a notepad was torn out, the pencil flew over the paper. This and no other way was how this task should be solved, he declared. I had to compare his sketch with the executed design, had to acknowledge or reject as he did, all this with a zeal as if both our lives depended on it.

His passion for changing everything around him celebrated true triumphs in this; for a city is something more or less well-built. Thus, he could not walk through the street without constantly being addressed by what he saw. And he was never at a loss for an answer. Usually, a whole dozen of the most diverse building projects lived simultaneously in his head; indeed, I sometimes had the impression of him as if all the architecture of this city were present to him at the same time in the form of a panorama. But as soon as he plunged into a detail, he was with all...

strength in this matter and in it alone. I remember how one day on the main square the old building of the Bank for Upper Austria and Salzburg was torn down. With burning impatience, Adolf followed the execution of the construction. He was in great concern whether the planned new building would fit into the cohesive image of the square. When he had to travel to Vienna in the meantime, I received the task of reporting to him continuously on the progress of this construction. In his letter of July 21, 1908, to me, it says: "When the bank is finished, please send me a picture postcard." I finally got myself out of the predicament by obtaining a photograph of the finished new building, since there were no picture postcards of it, and sending it to him in Vienna. Adolf, by the way, was very satisfied with the solution reached.

There were many such "houses" with which he was constantly occupied. I was dragged to every new building. He felt responsible for everything that was built. But far more than those concrete tasks, he was interested in the large projects for which he was his own client. Here, no limit was set to his desire for change. I observed this activity at first with very mixed feelings and wondered why he occupied himself with such stubbornness with things that, so I believed, could never be realized. But he intensified his involvement in a project all the more, the further it was from realization. These projects were so present to him in all details as if they had already been executed and the entire city of Linz had already been rebuilt according to his plans. I did not always quite keep up and sometimes did not immediately know whether it was a matter of something existing or something yet to be executed. To him, it was one and the same. He made no distinction whether he spoke of something finished or something planned. The execution was for him the most incidental thing in building.

Nowhere is the unerring consistency of his nature revealed so convincingly as in this field. What was a plan for the fifteen-year-old, the fifty-year-old carried out, often, for example in the plan for the new Danube bridge, so faithful in detail as if not decades, but only a few weeks lay between plan and execution. The plan was there. Then came influence and power, the plan became an order. The means came. The order became reality. This happened with such uncanny logical consistency as if it had already been quite natural for the fifteen-year-old that one day order and means would have to come by themselves. I simply cannot fit this fact into my modest head. It is incomprehensible to me how such a thing is possible. One would be tempted to speak of a miracle, precisely because the intellect can no longer keep up. I am almost shy to describe what follows, because the plans that this then...

completely unknown youth had made regarding the expansion of his hometown of Linz coincide in every detail with the urban planning that began after the year 1938, so that one might doubt the correctness of my statements. And yet, these accounts are true down to the last detail.

On my eighteenth birthday, August 3, 1906, my friend gave me a villa. It was, similar to the villa planned for Stefanie, kept in the style of the Italian Renaissance he so loved. It is a stroke of luck that I kept these sketches. They show a stately, palace-like building, the facade of which is structured by a built-in tower. The floor plan reveals a well-thought-out arrangement of rooms, which are attractively grouped around the music salon. The winding staircase, architecturally a delicate problem, is reproduced in a separate elevation sketch. Likewise, the entrance hall with the massive beamed ceiling is drawn out separately. A briskly dashed-off sketch shows the portal. Adolf also picked out a suitable building site for this birthday villa with me. It was to stand on the Bauernberg, in the midst of magnificent parklands. During my visits to Bayreuth, I was careful not to remind Hitler of this imaginary birthday house. He would have been capable of actually building me a villa on the Bauernberg, which would probably have turned out more beautiful than this building, which was strongly adapted to the contemporary taste of the time.

Much more impressive are two architectural sketches that I have kept from his numerous designs for the new music hall. The old theater was an inadequate building in every respect. Art lovers in Linz had formed an association with the goal of initiating the construction of a modern theater. Adolf immediately joined this association and participated in the ideas competition that had been announced. For months, he worked again and again on these plans and designs and believed in all seriousness that his proposals would be accepted. He was immensely outraged when the association, in which he had placed such great hopes, finally only had the old building renovated instead of a new construction. One should read his biting sentences about it in the letter he wrote to me on August 17, 1908: "It seems to me they want to patch up the old junk once more." Full of rage, he declared that he would most like to pack up his handbook for architecture and send it with the "following-theater-founding-association-design-construction-execution-committee-appropriate address." How his fury vents itself in this monstrous word!

The present sheet dates from this time. On the front side, it shows the planned auditorium. Columns divide the walls, against which individual boxes are placed. Figural decoration crowns the balustrade. A mighty vault encloses the hall. On the back of this bold design...

Adolf explained to me the acoustic conditions of the building he had planned, which interested me particularly as a musician. One can clearly see how the sound waves coming from the orchestra pit are reflected off the ceiling in such a way that they virtually shower down from above onto the audience sitting in the stalls. Adolf occupied himself a great deal with acoustic questions. Thus, I remember exactly his proposals to modify the Volksgarten Hall, whose poor acoustics constantly annoyed us, by making corresponding installations in the ceiling.

And now to the reconstruction of Linz! His ideas in this regard were inexhaustible, yet he did not handle thoughts indiscriminately; rather, he held steadfastly to decisions he had once made, even later on. It is only for this reason that so much of it has remained in my memory. Whenever we passed by this or that spot, all the plans were instantly present to him in detail.

The wonderfully enclosed main square delighted Adolf time and again. He only regretted that the two houses situated toward the Danube obstructed the view of the river and the range of hills lying beyond. In his plans, the two houses were moved so far apart that the view of the new, street-like widened bridge was cleared, without impairing the hall-like effect of the square—a solution that he later realized exactly as planned. He found the City Hall located on this square unworthy of an aspiring city like Linz. The new City Hall was to arise as a stately building, by no means Neo-Gothic, as was common for city halls at that time—one thinks of the buildings in Vienna or Munich—but rather in a thoroughly modern style. Hitler took different paths in the remodeling of the old castle, which enthroned the old town like an unsightly box. In a bookstore, he had discovered an old engraving by Merian showing the state of the castle before the great fire. This original state was to be restored and the castle furnished for museum purposes. A building that inspired him again and again was the museum created in 1892. How often we stood before the hundred-and-ten-meter-long marble frieze, which depicts scenes from the history of the province in sculptural reliefs. Adolf could not see enough of it. He enlarged the museum building across the adjacent garden of the Elizabethines and extended the frieze to two hundred and twenty meters, so that it would have become, as he claimed, the largest sculptural frieze on the continent. He concerned himself much with the new cathedral currently under construction. He considered the attempt to revive the Gothic style in our time to be hopeless and was also annoyed with the people of Linz because they could not assert themselves against the Viennese. The tower of the Linz Cathedral was, in fact, only permitted to be one hundred and thirty-four meters high, in order to maintain a respectful distance from the one hundred and thirty-eight meter high tower of Vienna's St. Stephen's Cathedral. Adolf was most pleased with the new masons' lodge created by the cathedral construction, from which he hoped capable stonemasons for the city would one day emerge. The railway station was located much too close to the city and, with its track systems, hindered traffic and structural further development. Here Adolf found a solution that was downright ingenious for the time. He moved the station out of the city into open terrain, towards the Welser Heide or towards Kleinmünchen — he considered both possibilities — and led the tracks underground beneath the city. The space that became free through the demolition of the old station was intended to serve an expansion of the Volksgarten. When reading this, one must imagine the time around 1907 and consider that a completely unknown eighteen-year-old person, who possessed neither prior education nor professional qualification for this, presented these plans which actually revolutionized urban planning; a proof of how much he was already able to disregard existing ideas even then.

Similar to the city itself, Hitler also developed the surroundings of Linz. An interesting idea moved him in his romantic thinking during the expansion of Wildberg Castle, which rises from the deeply cut Haselgraben. The castle was to be restored to its original state and settled in the form of an open-air museum — at that time a completely new idea! He wanted to gather certain craftsmen there. Their trades would have to, on the one hand, approach medieval tradition, but on the other hand serve modern purposes, for example tourism. These people settled at the castle were to dress entirely according to the old fashion. Old guild customs were still to apply there, and a Mastersingers' school was also to be established. To this "island on which the centuries have stood still" — as he expressed it literally — people would pilgrimage in order to study the life and bustle of a medieval castle settlement. Beyond Dinkelsbühl and Rothenburg, not only architecture but real life would be shown at Wildberg. The toll to be collected from visitors at the entrance gates would have to serve as a subsidy for the livelihood of the castle residents. The selection of suitable craftsmen caused Adolf much headache, and I remember well that we often debated it for a very long time. After all, I myself was soon facing my master's examination and therefore had a word to say in the matter.

The tower on the Lichtenberg, by contrast, became a completely modern facility. A mountain railway led up to the summit. Here a comfortable hotel arose. A three hundred meter high tower — a steel construction, which occupied him greatly — crowned the whole thing. From the highest platform of this tower, he claimed, one would be able to see the gilded eagle on the tip of Vienna's St. Stephen's Tower glisten with binoculars in good visibility. I believe I saw a sketch of this project at Adolf's.

The boldest project, however, which put all others in the shade, was the construction of a magnificent arch bridge that spanned the Danube River at a great height.

For this purpose, he planned the layout of a high-altitude road. This was to begin at the Gugl, which at that time was an ugly sand quarry site enclosed by a wooden plank. This pit was to be filled with garbage and refuse brought in from the city and a park was to be created. The new road would then swing up in a broad sweep to the city forest. (Incidentally, the Linz city planning office reached this point on its own initiative some time ago, without knowing the plans of the young Hitler. The high-altitude road built in the meantime coincides exactly with the road projected by Hitler.) The Kaiser-Franz-Joseph-Warte in the Jägermayerwald — it still stands today — was to fall. In its place, a proud monument would arise. In a hall of honor, the busts of all the greats who have earned merit for the land of Upper Austria are united. From the dome of the hall of honor, one will enjoy the magnificent panoramic view of the wide land. As the crowning glory of the structure, the figure of Siegfried appears, stretching his sword Nothung into the air. (Here, the models of Valhalla, the Kelheim Liberation Hall, and the Hermann Monument in the Teutoburg Forest clearly play a role.) From this spot, the bridge swings in a single arch over to the steep walls of the opposite bank mountain. Adolf was led to this idea by the legend of a bold rider who, fleeing from his pursuers, is said to have jumped from this spot into the gruesome depths to reach the other shore by swimming across the Danube. This bridge surpassed everything imaginable until then. We calculated the span of the bridge arch to be more than five hundred meters. The apex of the bridge was ninety meters above the level of the river. I very much regret that no sketch of this truly unique planning has been preserved. This crossing of the deeply cut Danube valley creates a structure for Linz, my friend explained, the likes of which the world does not possess a second. Across this bold bridge, the road connects to the terrain of the Pöstlingberg and in this way will connect the most beautiful viewpoint over the city, which we both especially loved, with the southern terrain. How often we stood on one or the other rocky bank, and Adolf made the planned layout clear to me in all its details.

These bold, far-reaching plans made a peculiar impression on me, which I can still clearly recall. Even if the whole thing remained, in my eyes, a play of thoughts, far removed from the possibility of realization, these ideas nevertheless exerted a strange magic over me. What occupied my friend and was quickly captured on a few fleeting scraps of paper was no aimless fantasizing. Somehow, these seemingly remote thoughts were based on something compelling and persuasive. A kind of higher logic prevailed within them. One thought logically followed another; one thing conditioned the next. Thus, the whole was placed into a thoroughly clear and rational context, whereby decidedly romantic ideas, such as that of the "living Middle Ages at Wildberg Castle," clearly originated from the intellectual world of Richard Wagner. They were combined with extremely modern technical ideas, such as the elimination of disruptive railway crossings by moving the track systems into underground tunnels. It was not an unrestrained wallowing in unreal imaginings, but rather a very disciplined, in a certain sense almost systematic, approach.

Perhaps it was precisely in this that the special attraction lay, which this "composing in architecture" exerted on me: that it appeared thoroughly feasible, even if both of us, poor, penniless young people, had no possibility whatsoever of realizing these plans. But that did not bother my friend in the least. He believed firmly that one day he would carry out all these grand plans. Money was irrelevant to him. Only time was decisive—that is, the lifespan within which he could realize his ideas. My reason rebelled against this unconditional belief in a later realization of these plans. This was the point at which I could not follow him. What would become of us one day? Of me, perhaps? At best, a sought-after orchestra conductor! And of Adolf? A gifted painter, a draftsman, perhaps a significant architect! But how far removed were these professional goals from the prestige and standing, wealth and power, that were necessary to completely reshape an entire city from the ground up? And God knows whether, given my friend's unheard-of intellectual momentum and impulsive temperament, it would have stopped at the reconstruction of Linz! He could not leave anything that came near him in peace. I therefore had serious misgivings and ventured a remark now and then intended to remind him of the undeniable fact that, if we pooled our cash, we would have raised at most a few crowns, hardly enough to buy drawing paper. Mostly, Adolf passed over this indignantly. I can still see his gruff expression, the stiff gesture of the dismissive hand with which he rejected such objections. For him, these were plans that one day, as a matter of course, with the greatest precision had to be carried out. He prepared himself for this in every detail. And no matter how illusory a thought seemed to be, he thought it through to the last possibilities. How was the material for that arched bridge over the Danube valley to be brought in? Was stone an option or did they have to resort to steel? How could the abutments be founded? Was the rock stable enough? Questions that were partly technically inadequate, partly again very pertinent. Adolf already lived so much in this "remodeled" Linz that he adjusted his daily habits to it. We went to the "Temple of Honor," to the "Hall of Consecration," or to our "Medieval Open-Air Museum."

When one day I once again interrupted the bold flow of his thoughts directed towards the construction of a national monument with the sober question of how he envisioned the financing of this building, I first received only a harsh "Oh, whatever, money!" to hear. But apparently this objection left him no peace after all. He did what other people who want to get money quickly do: he bought a lottery ticket. And yet there was a difference in how Adolf bought the ticket and how other people do it; for other people only wish for the jackpot or dream of it, but he had already secured it for himself at the moment of the purchase and only forgotten to collect the sum immediately. The only effort there was for him was to use this, after all, very handsome sum meaningfully and sensibly.

Just as he often, in the midst of his boldest plans, suddenly made the most sober considerations — a typical characteristic of his! — so it was also with this lottery ticket purchase. Although he was already beginning to build in his imagination with the sum that the jackpot yielded, he simultaneously studied the game plan in detail and weighed our chances to a hair's breadth. My memories of the story of the big lottery win are so precise and accurate because this episode became nothing less than a triumph of our friendship. The imaginary jackpot won together had an effect on our friendship that was shorter, because it was only temporary, but nevertheless a similarly binding effect as the shared and mutually obliging secret surrounding Stefanie.

Adolf had invited me to buy a ticket together with him. In doing so, he proceeded very systematically. The ticket cost ten crowns. I wanted to contribute half, that is, five crowns. These five crowns, however, were not allowed to be given by my parents, but had to be earned by myself. I already had pocket money back then and also occasionally received tips from customers, for example, when I had papered a bedroom or a dining room particularly beautifully. Adolf had me prove exactly where the five crowns came from. When he had convinced himself that through my contribution really no third person came into play, we went together to the office of the state lottery to buy the ticket. He took a very long time to choose. I do not know by what criteria he made the selection. Since he held absolutely no stock in occult things and was more than sober in this regard, his behavior remained a mystery to me. But ultimately, it was about finding the jackpot. "Here I have it!" he declared to me and tucked the ticket into the small black book with the flexible cover, in which his poems were kept.

The period until the drawing was actually the most beautiful time of our friendship. Love and enthusiasm, great thoughts, bold ideas—we already possessed all of that. The only thing we had lacked until now was money. Now we had that too. What more could we want?

Even though the jackpot would bring in a great deal of money, my friend by no means allowed himself to be carried away into a reckless squandering of this sum. On the contrary! He proceeded very calculatingly and economically. It would have been pointless to put this sum of money into one of the projects, such as the construction of the museum; for that would have been only a partial action within the framework of the large urban planning. It was more sensible to use this sum for ourselves, to gain a position and public standing that would enable further steps in the direction of our future plans.

Building a villa for us was too expensive. The construction would have swallowed up so much of this sum that we would have moved into this glamorous villa as poor devils. Adolf suggested a middle-ground solution. We should rent a floor, he explained, and expand it for our purposes. After long, careful examination of various possibilities, we chose the second floor of the house at Kirchengasse No. 2 in Urfahr; for this house possessed a quite unique location. Although it was close to the banks of the Danube, the view on the other side looked out over the green, charming hills of the Mühlviertel, which culminated in the Pöstlingberg. We secretly sneaked into the house, checked the view provided by the staircase windows, and Adolf worked out the floor plan.

Then we moved in, so to speak. One wing of the floor, the larger one, was to be occupied by my friend; the smaller wing was reserved for me. In doing so, Adolf distributed the rooms so that his study was as far as possible from mine, so that when he sat at the drawing table, he would not be disturbed by my musical exercises.

My friend also took care of the furnishing of the rooms himself and drew the individual pieces of furniture to scale in the floor plan. They were exceptionally beautiful, solid pieces of furniture, made by the best master craftsmen in the city, by no means cheap stencil work. Even the wall patterns for the painting of the individual rooms were designed by Adolf. Only regarding the curtains and draperies was I allowed to have a say and show him patterns of how I wanted to paper the rooms assigned to me. He was certainly pleased with the confident and natural way in which I participated in the establishment of the apartment. We did not doubt that the jackpot was certainly ours; Adolf had completely cast a spell over me with his absolute belief in the desired success. I was already counting on an early move into the house at Kirchengasse 2.

Despite all the simplicity, a solid personal taste was evident in everything concerning this apartment. Adolf intended to gather a circle of art-loving personalities in our home. I would have to play music during these gatherings. He would perform or read something aloud or explain his latest works. Regularly, we would travel to Vienna to hear lectures there, and to visit theaters and concerts. (I noticed then that Vienna already played a large role in my friend's world of imagination! A wonder that Adolf had decided on Kirchengasse in Urfahr!)

Our lives would not be overturned despite the jackpot. We remained simple people, good and solid, but by no means conspicuously dressed. Regarding clothing, Adolf had a delightful idea at the time that completely thrilled me: We will both dress exactly alike, he declared, so that everyone will take us for brothers! I believe this idea alone was worth the jackpot to me! It shows how much our theater acquaintance had transformed into a deep, romantically transfigured friendship.

Naturally, I had to leave my parents' apartment and give up the upholstery trade. My future musical work left me no more time for such things; for as our studies progressed, our understanding of artistic experiences also grew and occupied us completely.

Adolf thought of everything, even the household. This was necessary, for the day of the drawing drew closer and closer. A highly educated lady would preside over our house and see that things were in order. It must be a lady of advanced age, so that no expectations or intentions arise that would run counter to our artistic calling. We also agreed on the staff that the extensive household required. So everything was prepared. This image occupied me for a long time afterward: an older, already somewhat gray-haired, but incredibly distinguished lady, who receives the guests for the two very talented seventeen- and eighteen-year-old youths entrusted to her in the festively lit staircase of the floor, guests who belong to the selected, high-spirited circle of friends, that the two of them gather around them.

During the summer months, we go on travels. As the first unshakeable goal, Bayreuth is visited, where we enjoy the music dramas of the great master in the most perfect performance. (This part of our beautiful youthful dream was the only one that came true for me, even without a jackpot!) From Bayreuth, other memorable cities are traveled to, magnificent cathedrals inspected, castles and fortresses visited. But we also visit industrial centers, shipyards, and port facilities. "It shall be the whole of Germany!" Adolf declared. This was one of his favorite sayings.

The day of the drawing came.

Adolf came rushing into the workshop, agitated, with the list of winners. Seldom have I heard him rage as he did then. First, his anger broke out against the state lottery, this state-organized speculation on the gullibility of people, this open fraud at the expense of well-meaning citizens! Then his fury spread to the state itself, this entity patched together from ten or twelve or God knows how many nations, this monster married together by the Habsburgs! Could one expect anything else from it than that two poor devils were cheated out of their last few crowns?

Not a single time did the thought occur to Adolf to reproach himself because he had claimed the jackpot for himself with such absolute self-evidence. Yet at the time, he had sat for hours over the list of winners and had precisely calculated our very slim chances of winning from the number of tickets and the advertised prizes. I could not understand this contradiction in his nature. But that is how it was.

For the first time, his unheard-of willpower, which suggestively gave the things that moved him the required direction, had left him in the lurch. He could not bear that; for this was worse than the loss of the money and the renunciation of the apartment and the housekeeper receiving our guests in elegant nonchalance.

It seemed more sensible to Adolf to build on himself and his own future than to rely on state institutions, such as this state lottery was. There, no such mishap could occur. Thus, after a short period of extreme dejection, he found his way back to his earlier projects. One of his favorite plans was the reconstruction of the Danube Bridge, which connects Linz with Urfahr. Every day we walked across this bridge over the river flowing calmly to the east. Adolf especially loved this path across the bridge. Something free, something pressing forward lay above the moving water, an atmosphere that was different from that of the streets and squares of the city. I had the impression that the proximity of the river gave wings to his thoughts; for hardly anywhere else did he speak of these ideas with such devotion and emotion as on this long-familiar path across the river.

When the flood in May 1868 had torn away five bridge bays of the old wooden bridge, the decision was made to build an iron bridge, which was completed in 1872. This rather unattractive lattice girder bridge was far too narrow and, although there were no cars at that time, could not satisfy the traffic. There was always a frightening crush on this bridge. Adolf delighted in the cursing teamsters who tried to make room for themselves with wild oaths and cracking whips. Although he otherwise had little sense for the immediate and much preferred to plan for the long term, he proposed an interim solution that could remedy the prevailing evil. Without changing the bridge itself, two-meter-wide, cantilevered sidewalks were to be added on the left and right, which were to accommodate pedestrian traffic and relieve the roadway.

Of course, in Linz, no one cared about the suggestions of this young dreamer, who could not even point to good school reports. With all the greater zeal, Adolf turned to the new construction of the bridge.

The ugly iron construction had to fall. The new bridge was to be dimensioned and designed in such a way that the visitor walking from the main square to the Danube would have the impression of having not a bridge, but a beautiful, representative street before him. Accordingly, the bridgeheads were designed. Mighty statues were intended to enhance the artistic impression.

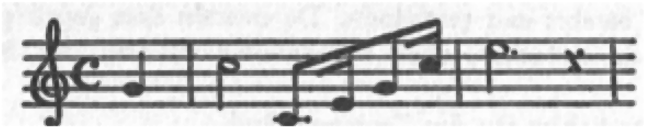
It is deeply regrettable that, as far as I know, none of the numerous sketches Hitler designed at that time for the new construction of the Linz Danube bridge have survived; for it would be extremely fascinating to compare these sketches with the plans according to which this bridge was designed and commissioned by Adolf Hitler thirty years later. We owe it to his impatience, which could not let the "new" Linz arise soon enough, that despite the war breaking out in 1939, at least this structure, as the central project of Linz urban planning, was also completed.

THE VISION

It was the most impressive hour I ever experienced with my friend! It has remained so unforgettable to me that even incidental things—the clothes Adolf wore that evening, the weather that prevailed then—are as present to me as if this experience stood outside of all time. The fact that this experience imprinted itself so unmovably upon me was perhaps also due to the circumstance that I had never before experienced the midnight starry sky as directly as I did then. The city itself, at night, with its own albeit meager lights, makes the stars in the sky invisible. Only in the solitude, upon the heights of the Freinberg, did the whole wonder of the firmament suddenly stand before me as if newly created, and the breath of the Eternal touched me as directly as never before. Certainly, I had seen the starry sky often enough before. But as it is with young, receptive people, only a particularly graced moment, the coincidence of peculiar circumstances, turns the previously indifferently received image into a sign with which God addresses us directly.

What has remained strongest and clearest in my memory when looking back on my youthful friendship with Adolf Hitler are not his speeches, nor his political ideas, but that nocturnal hour on the Freinberg. With it, his future destiny was decided. To the outside world, he certainly held fast to the planned artistic career, surely out of consideration for his mother; for this represented, after all, a more concrete goal when he said he would become a painter than if he had said: I will become a politician. But the resolve to take this path fell in this lonely hour above the heights of the city of Linz. Perhaps the word "resolve" does not say the right thing; for it was not a decision of the will that he made then, but rather a visionary recognition of the path to be taken, which lay entirely outside of his will.

Trumpet: 'rompete:



The sword motif from the "Ring". Below stood Adolf in his black coat, his dark hat pressed down over his forehead. A cold, unfriendly November evening, on which it grew dark early.

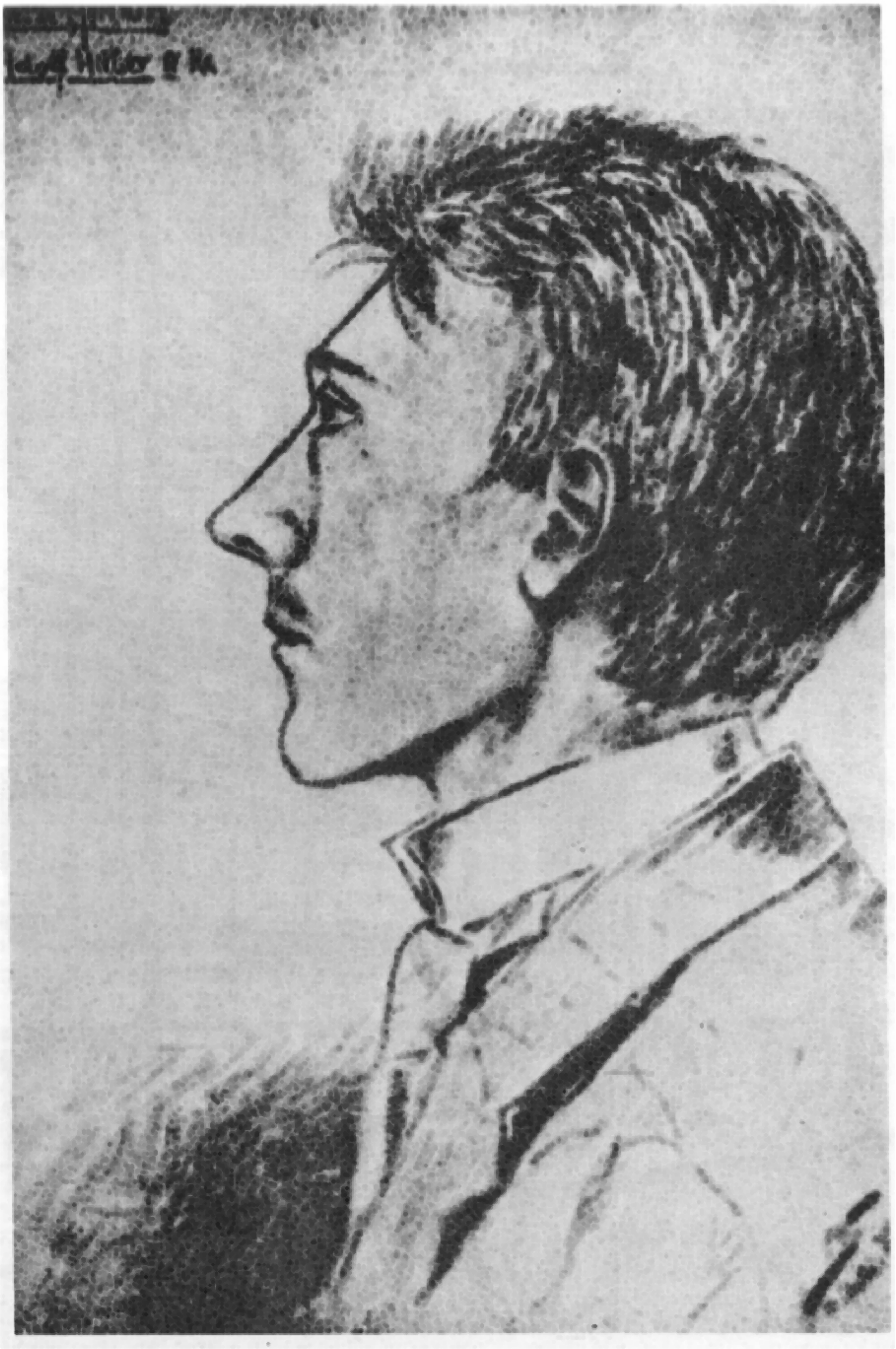
Adolf beckoned impatiently from below. I was just in the process of cleaning myself of the dust and dirt of the workshop and changing for the theater. Tonight, "Rienzi" was being performed. We had not yet seen this opera by Richard Wagner and were in a state of great suspense. To secure the columns in the standing area of the pit, we had to be at the entrance early enough. Adolf's whistle, repeated more stormily, urged haste.

He had already told me a bit about this opera. Richard Wagner began the work in 1838 in Dresden and continued it during his stay in the Baltic lands. It is interesting that just then, as he was getting to know the North, a subject from medieval Rome occupied him. In Paris, he then completed "Rienzi," which premiered on stage two years later in Dresden and established Richard Wagner's reputation as an opera composer, although he had not yet found his peculiar form in this work. "Rienzi" stands at the turning point. After this opera, Wagner turns toward the North and finds his own artistic space in the Germanic world of gods. "Rienzi," although set in the year 1347, is pulsed through by the breath and rhythm of that revolution which swept across German soil ten years later and also most violently affected Wagner's personal fate. "Rienzi" is the great confrontation with the ideas of the year 1848.

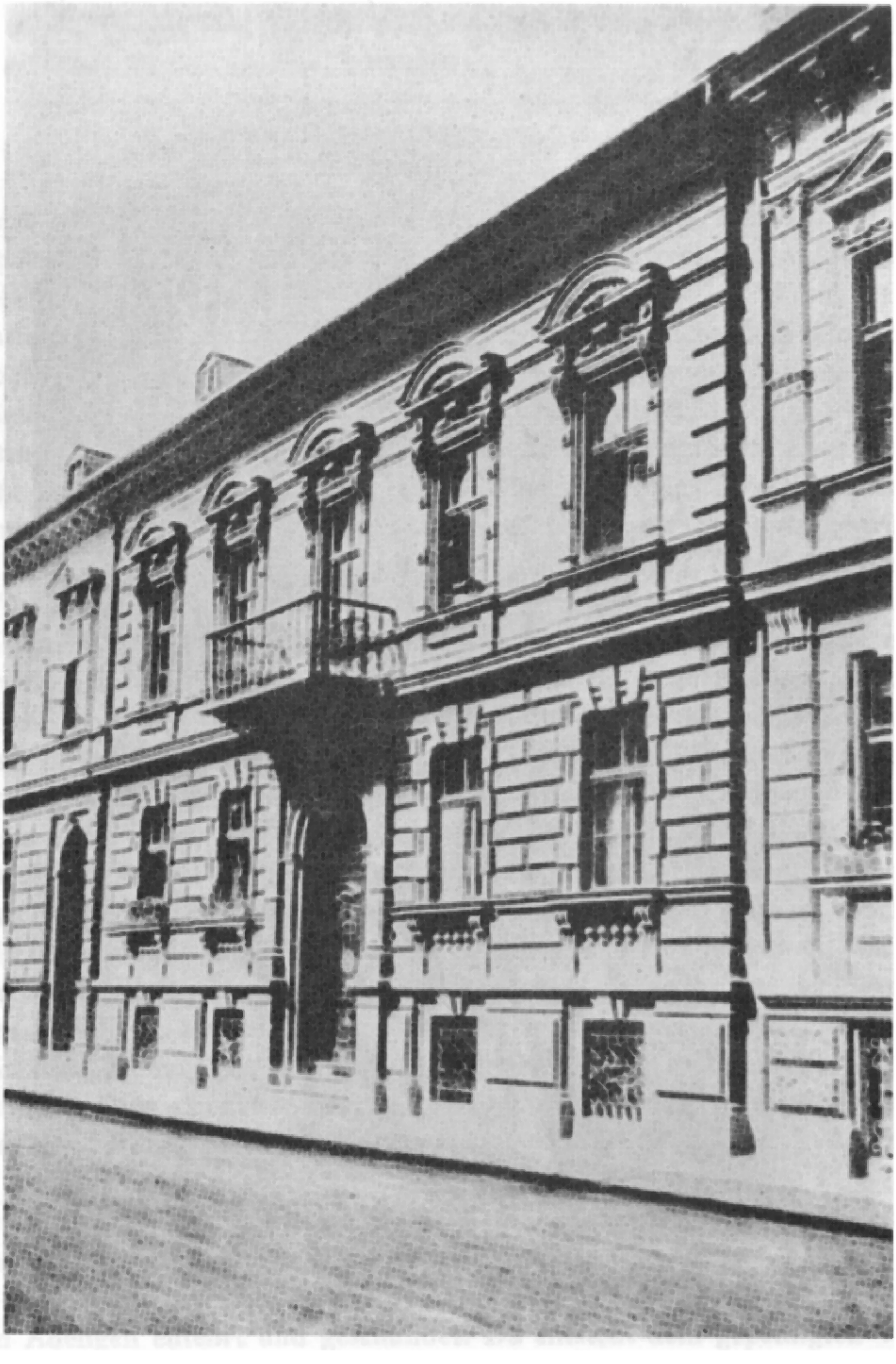
The music of the opera "Rienzi," which I had studied with the help of a piano score, is still very melodic and extremely catchy compared to Wagner's later works. The heavily staffed orchestra with full brass and percussion gives the opera a pompous character, as befits the dramatically concentrated action. The youthful joy of music-making of the master celebrates true triumphs in the magnificent intensification of the whole, in the revolutionary audacity, and in the brilliantly deployed orchestra. Added to this is the captivating plot, which held us both spellbound from the first moment.

There we stood, enraptured in the theater, and experienced how the people in Rome are oppressed by the proud, unscrupulous Nobili; the men are forced by them into socage service, the women and girls dishonored and violated by the haughty nobles. Then, for the tormented people, the liberator arises in Cola Rienzi, a simple, still unknown man. It rang out clearly:

"But if you hear the trumpet's call
Resound in long-sustained tone,



The sixteen-year-old Hitler. This drawing by a classmate in the fourth grade of the Realschule in Steyr, named Sturmlechner, is the only representation from Hitler's youth known to date.



Apartment in Urfahr near Linz, Blütengasse 9. The two windows to the right of the balcony belonged to the mother's bedroom.

Then wake up, hurry all hither,
Freedom I proclaim to Roma's sons!”

In a bold coup, Rienzi frees Rome from the tyranny of the Nobili and has the people swear an oath to the laws. Adriano, although himself descending from the proud Colonna lineage that leads the Nobili, joins Rienzi. But he wants clarity and asks the new ruler:

„Rienzi. Ha, what do you intend?
Mighty I see you, speak up,
For what do you use the power?”

Feverish with excitement, we awaited Rienzi's answer to this question of destiny.

„Well then! Rome I make great and free,
...
Only the law will I create,
Subject to the people like noblemen!”

What a word! As if spoken for us!

Even the Nobili pay homage to Rienzi. His victory is complete. Rome is in his hand. Far-reaching plans fill him. The liberated masses cheer for him. One from their midst proclaims to the people, proclaims to us, the moved listeners:

„He has created us into a people,
Therefore listen to me and agree with me:
Let it be his people and King He!”

Rienzi rejects the title "King." When men from the people ask him what they should call him in his position, he points them to the great role models of the past. That too was spoken entirely from our hearts:

„But if you choose me as the protector
Of the rights recognized by the people,
Then look upon your ancestors
And call me your People's Tribune!”

The masses respond enthusiastically:

"Hail to you, Rienzi, our Tribune of the People!"

"Tribune of the People!" The word etched itself unforgettably into our minds. A conspiracy is underway. Stefano Colonna, Adriano's father, stands at the head of those who wish to eliminate the Tribune. Colonna does not let himself be swayed by the cheering of the masses. We heard, trembling with indignation, his accusation:

"He is the idol of this people,
Whom he keeps enchanted through deceit."

Adriano, standing between his father and Rienzi, whose sister Irene he loves fervently, uncovers the plot. The Nobili are arrested. Yet Rienzi lets mercy prevail over justice. Abusing his leniency, the Nobili now attempt to incite the masses against Rienzi. This succeeds. The same men who cheered the Tribune soon declare:

"Ha, the traitor! He, whom we served,
Who sacrificed our blood to his ambition,
Into ruin he plunged us!
Ha, revenge upon him!"

Shuddering, we witnessed how the faithful deserted Rienzi. The Church pronounces the curse of excommunication against him.

"...does the people also desert me,
Whom I first raised to this name,
Does every friend desert me, whom fortune
Created for me..."

In an uprising instigated by the Nobili, Rienzi is to be killed. If Rienzi falls, the masses will also sink back into dull plebeianism:

"The rabble, pah!
It is Rienzi who makes them knights;
Take Rienzi from them, and they are what they were."

Yet the fall of the Tribune must come from the ranks of his followers.

Rienzi is only truly stripped of power when he sees that his loyal followers are abandoning him. The Capitol and Rienzi's house are set on fire by his own confidants. We heard the cry:

> "Come here! Come here! Up, hurry to us!
> Bring stones here! Bring firebrands!
> He is cursed, he is banished!"

From the balcony of his house, Rienzi wants to speak once more to the excited masses who are trying to stone him. How his words move us:

> "O tell me, who makes you great and free?
> Do you no longer remember the jubilation
> With which you greeted me then,
> When I gave freedom and peace?"

And the answer? So we ask. No one listens to him anymore. Adriano, who despite his love for Irene has made himself the leader of the outraged crowd, storms toward the burning house. Shaken, Rienzi sees how betrayal from his own ranks seals his downfall and, before the flames close over him, curses the people for whom he lived and fought.

> "... What! Is this Rome?
> Wretches, unworthy of this name!
> The last Roman curses you!
> Cursed, annihilated be this city!
> Rot and wither, Rome!
> So your degenerate people will it!"

Shaken, we experienced the downfall of Rienzi. In silence, we both left the theater. It had become midnight. But my friend walked on, serious and withdrawn, hands buried deep in his coat pockets, further down the street, away from the city. Although he was usually accustomed to speaking immediately after an artistic experience that had moved him, and to criticizing the performance with sharp judgment in order to free himself from the oppressive impression, Adolf remained silent for a long time after this Rienzi performance. This surprised me. I asked him for his judgment on the performance. He looked at me strangely, almost hostilely. "Be silent!" he shouted harshly.

A dark, unfriendly November night! The damp, cold, wet fog lay thick over the narrow, stuffy alleys. Our footsteps echoed lonely over the pavement. Adolf turned into the path that leads past the small suburban houses, pressed close to the ground, up to the heights of the Freinberg. My friend strode ahead, completely withdrawn into himself. He seemed almost uncanny to me. He was paler than usual. The upturned coat collar further intensified this impression.

The path rose up over small, meager gardens and individual patches of meadow. The fog remained behind. Like a heavy, dull mass, it weighed upon the city and hid the dwellings of men from our sight.

"Where are you going?" I wanted to ask my friend. But his narrow, pale face looked so forbidding that I suppressed the question.

Not a soul was around us anymore. The city sank into the fog.

As if driven by an invisible force, Adolf climbed to the summit of the Freinberg. And only now did I see that we no longer stood in solitude and darkness; for above us, the stars were shining.

Adolf stood before me. And now he seized both of my hands and held them fast. This was a gesture I had never experienced from him before. I felt by the pressure of his hands how deeply shaken he was. His eyes were feverish with excitement. The words did not come from his mouth as fluently as usual, but broke out of him rough and hoarse. From this voice, I noticed even more how deeply this experience must have stirred him.

Gradually, he spoke himself free. The words flowed with more emotion. Never before and never again afterwards have I heard Adolf Hitler speak as he did in that hour, when we stood so lonely under the stars, as if we were the only creatures in this world.

It is impossible for me to reproduce in detail the words my friend spoke to me in this hour.

Something quite remarkable, which I had never observed in him before when he had spoken to me in an excited manner, struck me in this hour: It was as if another "I" were speaking through him, by which he himself was touched with the same profound emotion as I was. It was by no means as is sometimes said of a stirring orator, that he intoxicates himself with his own words. On the contrary! I rather had the impression that he himself was experiencing with astonishment, even with emotion, what was breaking out of him with elemental force. I do not presume to judge this observation. But it was an ecstatic state, a state of complete detachment, in which he placed what he had experienced in "Rienzi"—without directly mentioning this example and model—into a magnificent vision on another level appropriate to him, though not merely as a cheap copy of the

"Rienzi" experience. Rather, the impression received from this work had only been the external impulse that had forced him to speak. Like a dammed-up flood breaking through bursting dikes, the words burst forth from him. In magnificent, stirring images, he developed for me his future and that of his people.

Until then, I had been convinced that my friend wanted to become an artist, specifically a painter, or perhaps a master builder or architect. There was no more talk of that in this hour. He was concerned with something higher, which I could not yet fully grasp. I wondered greatly about this because I thought the profession of an artist appeared to him as the highest, most desirable goal. But now he spoke of a mandate that he would one day receive from the people, to lead them up from servitude to the heights of freedom.

A youth still completely unknown to men spoke to me in that strange hour. He spoke of a special mission that would one day be bestowed upon him. I, as the only one to whom he spoke, hardly understood what he meant by it. Many years had to pass before I understood what this "star hour," removed from all things earthly, had meant for my friend.

Silence followed his words.

We descended to the city. From the towers, the third hour of the morning struck.

In front of our house, we parted. Adolf pressed my hand in farewell. To my astonishment, I saw that he did not go toward the city in the direction of his apartment, but again toward the mountain.

"Where else do you want to go?" I asked in surprise.

He answered briefly: "I want to be alone!"

I looked after him for a long time as he, wrapped in his dark coat, climbed the nocturnal, deserted street alone. —

In the following days and also in the next weeks and months, Adolf never spoke of this hour on the Freinberg again. I wondered about it at first and could not explain this strange behavior; for I could not believe that he had forgotten this experience. As I was able to establish thirty-three years later, he never forgot it. But he remained silent about it because he wanted to keep this hour for himself alone. I could understand that and respected his silence. After all, it had been his hour, not mine. I had only the modest role of a sympathetic friend to play.

When I stayed in Bayreuth for the first time as a guest of the Reich Chancellor in 1939, shortly before the war began, I believed I should tell my host...

to give him pleasure by reminding him of that nocturnal hour on the Freinberg. I therefore told Adolf Hitler what I had retained in my memory of it, because I assumed that the enormous abundance of impressions and experiences that had stormed in upon him during these decades would have pushed that experience of the seventeen-year-old into the background. But even at my first words, I felt that he still remembered that hour exactly and had retained all the details with razor-sharp clarity in his memory. It evidently gave him pleasure to see his own memories confirmed by my account. I was also present when Adolf Hitler then retold this experience, which had occurred after the Linz performance of "Rienzi," to Frau Wagner, with whom we were guests. I thus found my own memory of it confirmed in twofold form. Unforgettable to me also remains the word with which Hitler concluded his story to Frau Wagner. He said earnestly: "In that hour, it began."

II

EXPERIENCES IN VIENNA

ADOLF GOES TO VIENNA

It had long since struck me that Adolf, in his conversations, whether they concerned questions of art, politics, or his own fate in life, could no longer find his way in the long-familiar but petty-bourgeois Linz and was increasingly moving Vienna into the center of his observations. Vienna, at that time still the glamorous imperial city, the fascinating metropolis of a state of over forty-five million people, promised to fulfill all the hopes he placed in the future. This hope was based on the fact that Adolf, at the time of which I speak, from the summer of 1907, already knew Vienna from a visit the previous year. In May and June of 1906, he had already been to Vienna, long enough to be enthused by what drew him to Vienna above all—the Court Museum, the Court Opera, the Burgtheater, the magnificent buildings on the Ring—but too short to yet see the hardship and misery that lay hidden behind the magnificent facade of the imperial city. This image, exaggerated by his artistic imagination and entirely illusory, which he had formed during his first visit to Vienna, exerted a tremendous attraction on him. In his thoughts, he often no longer dwelled in Linz at all, but was already living in the middle of Vienna, whereby his unheard-of ability to simply overlook the immediate and real and to take that which existed only in his imagination as reality stood him in very good stead.

I must here make a correction, minor in itself, to the statements that Adolf Hitler made in his book "Mein Kampf" about this first stay in Vienna. When he writes that he was "not yet sixteen years old" on his first trip to Vienna, that is not correct; for in fact, he had shortly before celebrated his seventeenth birthday and was therefore already in his eighteenth year. On the other hand, the words he writes in the further course about this first visit to Vienna coincide completely with my own memory:

> "I went there to study the picture gallery of the Court Museum, but had eyes almost only for the museum itself. I ran from one sight to another from early morning until late at night, but it was always only buildings that captivated me in the first place. For hours..."

I could stand in front of the Opera like that, admiring the Parliament for hours; the entire Ringstraße affected me like a spell from the Thousand and One Nights.”

I can certainly remember very well with what enthusiasm my friend told me about his impressions in Vienna. However, the details of this report have not remained in my memory. I am all the happier about the circumstance that, precisely from that first stay in Vienna, the cards that Adolf wrote to me at that time have been preserved. These four cards in total represent, apart from their biographical value, important graphological documents because, to my knowledge, they reproduce the earliest coherent and preserved handwriting of Adolf Hitler, a strangely fully-formed, extremely rapid script, behind which one would not suspect a youth of barely eighteen years, while the deficient orthography reveals not only a frequently disturbed and restless school career, but also a certain indifference in these matters. It is characteristic of my friend's direction of interest that he only sent me picture postcards of buildings. A different kind of young person of this age would certainly have selected other picture postcards for his friend.

Even the first card he wrote to me — it is dated May 7, 1906 — represents a masterpiece of the postcard production of that time. Adolf certainly sacrificed what was, by his standards, a nice piece of money for it. The card can actually be unfolded and represents a kind of triptych that reproduces a general view of Karlsplatz, with the Karlskirche at the center. The text reads in a literal reproduction:

> “Sending you this card, I must at the same time apologize that I let so long pass without word. I have thus arrived well, and am now diligently climbing about. Tomorrow I am going to the Opera for ‘Tristan,’ the day after tomorrow for ‘The Flying Dutchman,’ etc. Although I find everything very beautiful, I long to be back in Linz. Today to the City Theater. Your friend greets you,
>
> Adolf Hitler.”

On the picture side of the card, the Conservatory is explicitly marked at the top — probably the reason why Adolf chose this particular card, for even then he toyed with the idea that we would one day study together in Vienna, and missed no opportunity to present this possibility to me in an enticing way. At the bottom edge of the card he adds “Greetings to your esteemed parents.”

Regarding the content of this card, I would only like to say that the words “although I find everything very beautiful, I long to be back in Linz” by no means refer to Linz, which must have seemed very modest and provincial to him in view of the magnificent buildings in Vienna, but rather to Stefanie, whom he loved all the more fervently the further he was separated from her. It certainly satisfied his impetuous longing for her that, in the midst of the strange, indifferent metropolis where he felt lonelier than ever, he was able to write down these words, which only the friend initiated into his secret could understand.

On the same day, May 7, 1906, Adolf sent a second card to me, on which the stage of the Court Opera House can be seen. Presumably, it was this particularly successful photograph, which still allows a part of the interior decoration to be recognized, that appealed to him. To this, Adolf writes:

> "The interior of the palace is not uplifting. If the exterior is of mighty majesty, which impresses upon the building the seriousness of a monument of art, then in the interior one feels admiration rather than dignity. Only when the mighty waves of sound flood through the room and the whispering of the wind gives way to the terrible roaring of the waves of sound, then one feels sublimity and forgets the gold and the velvet with which the interior is overloaded.
>
> Adolf H."

On the front of the card, the "Greetings to your worthy parents" is again added.

Otherwise, Adolf is completely in his element here. The friend is forgotten, even Stefanie is forgotten. No greeting, no hint, so powerful is the experience that has shaken Adolf to his core. From the awkwardness of the style, one notices that his linguistic ability of expression is not sufficient to convey the magnitude and power of this impression. But it is precisely through this linguistic helplessness, which acts like the ecstatic stammering of an enthusiast, that the force of this experience can be felt. After all, it was the highest dream of our youth in Linz to experience a perfect performance in the Vienna Court Opera instead of the inadequate performances in this provincial theater. Certainly, Adolf also aimed at my own art-loving heart with this exuberant description. What could have made Vienna appear more enticing to me than the enthusiastic echo of such artistic impressions?

Already on the next day, May 8, 1906, he writes to me again; it is certainly striking that Adolf writes to me three times within two days. What drove him to do so is evident from this card, which shows an exterior view of the Vienna Court Opera.

On this card he writes:

“I am drawn back again to my dear Linz and Urfar. I want or must see Benkieser again. I wonder what he is doing; so, I will arrive in Linz on Thursday at 3:55. If you have time and are allowed, pick me up. Your friend Adolf Hitler. Greetings to your worthy parents!”

The word “Urfar,” misspelled in haste, is underlined, even though Adolf's mother was still living in Humboldtstraße at the time, not in Urfahr at all. Naturally, this remark is intended for Stefanie, as is the code word Benkieser agreed upon for her. The sentence “I want and must see Benkieser again” is extremely typical of Adolf's way of expressing himself and his character. Also characteristic of his outlook is the phrase: “If you have time and are allowed, pick me up.” He thus respects, even though it concerns an urgent matter, my relationship of obedience to my parents.

More than the double reference to Stefanie and the announced return of my friend, I was moved at the time by a fleeting remark scribbled over the view of the Court Opera: “Today 7—V2I2 Tristan.” The connection of the Court Opera depicted on the card, which was still unknown to me, with the idea of seeing the beloved “Tristan” in this magnificent building — four and a half hours, what unique happiness! —, awakened in me the irrepressible longing to be able to experience the same soon.

It is unfortunately impossible for me to determine whether Adolf actually returned to Linz on the following Thursday or whether he only wanted to remedy his insatiable longing for Stefanie with this statement. The remark in “Mein Kampf,” according to which the first stay in Vienna lasted only about fourteen days, is not correct. In fact, he stayed in Vienna for about four weeks, as evidenced by the card dated June 6, 1906. This card, which depicts the Franzensring with the Parliament, adheres to the usual form:

“To you and your worthy parents I hereby send my warmest
wishes for the holidays with many greetings
Respectfully

Adolf Hitler”

With this image gained from his first stay in Vienna, transfigured by the longing for Stefanie, Adolf entered the critical summer of 1907. What he lived through in those weeks resembled in many ways the severe crisis he had gone through two years earlier. At that time, after long consideration, he had finally settled his accounts with school.

and thus put an end to it, as bitter as it was for his mother. The severe illness had made the transition easier for him. Yet this transition led merely into the "hollowness of a comfortable life." Without school, without a firm professional goal, he had spent two years and, without earning anything himself, lived with his mother. By no means were these idle years. I can testify through my daily interaction with Adolf how intensively my friend studied and worked at that time. But this self-study, just like his artistic activity, revealed no specific goal. He felt himself that it could not go on like this anymore. Something had to happen, a fundamental change that would give a clear direction to his aimless and planless day-to-day existence.

Outwardly, this search for a new path manifested itself in dangerous depressions. I knew these states of mind of my friend, which stood in stark contrast to his ecstatic devotion and activity, only too well and knew that I could not help him with them. In such hours he was inaccessible, withdrawn, a stranger. It happened that we did not meet at all for one or two days. If I then went to Humboldtstraße to see him again, his mother would receive me with great astonishment: "Adolf has gone out," she explained, "he must be looking for you anyway." In fact, Adolf wandered at that time, as he told me, for days and nights alone and lonely through the fields and woods in the surroundings of the city. When I found him again, he was visibly relieved to have me around him. But if I asked what was wrong with him, I received the answer: "Leave me in peace" or a harsh "I don't know that myself." When I then pressed him further, he probably felt my sympathy and said then, in a milder mood: "All right, Gustl, but you can't help me either."

This conflicted state lasted for several weeks. On a beautiful summer evening, however, as we were walking along the upper Danube embankment after our stroll, the spell gradually broke. Adolf began to speak again in a familiar manner. Passing the "Ister" boathouse, we climbed up the Turmleitenweg to the Jägermayer forest. This is a steep, little-used forest path that leads in many serpentines to the observation tower. I can still remember this hour exactly. We had previously seen Stefanie, as usual, walking along the Landstraße on her mother's arm. Adolf was still completely under the spell of her appearance. Even if he saw Stefanie almost every day during this time, this encounter never had anything ordinary for him. While Stefanie was probably already long bored by the silent but strictly convention-abiding homage of this pale, slender youth felt, my friend retreated deeper and deeper into his daydreams from one encounter to the next. On the other hand, however, he had already moved beyond those romantic notions of a joint escape or suicide by then. In eloquent words, he described his condition to me. Day and night, the image of his beloved pursued him. He said he was unable to do any work; indeed, he could hardly think clearly anymore. He feared he would go mad if this state continued for much longer, a state he was unable to change on his own, but for which he could not hold Stefanie responsible either. "There is only one thing," he exclaimed, "I must go away, far away from Stefanie."

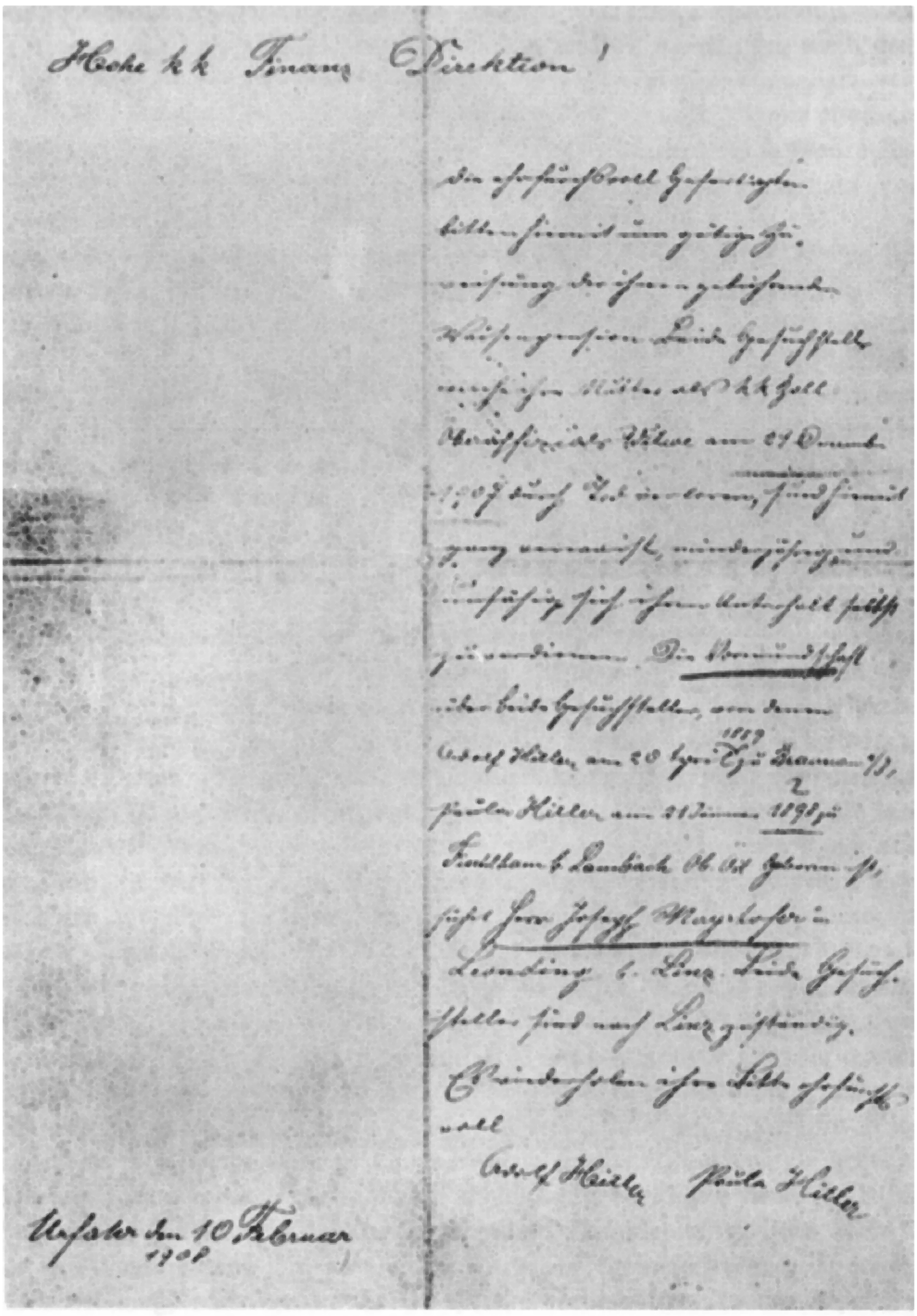
On the way home, he began to explain his decision to me in more detail. The physical separation would make the relationship with Stefanie more bearable for him because the possibility of a daily encounter would be eliminated. It did not occur to him that he might lose Stefanie as a result, so convinced was he that he had won her forever. In reality, the situation was different: Adolf perhaps already felt that in order to truly win Stefanie, he would have to speak to her or undertake something else decisive. Probably even the evening exchange of glances on the Landstraße already seemed somewhat childish to him. Nevertheless, he felt instinctively that an actual acquaintance with Stefanie would abruptly destroy his life's dream. Indeed, he once said to me: "If I introduce myself to Stefanie and her mother, I must tell her what I have, what I am, and what I want. My answer would immediately bring about the end of the relationship." Between this insight, still slumbering in the subconscious and not directly expressed but clearly felt, and the realization that he would have to place his relationship with Stefanie on a firm basis if it were not to become ridiculous, there was only one way out: flight. Immediately he began to paint his plan in every detail. I received precise instructions on what I was to say to Stefanie if she were to ask me in wonder about my friend's whereabouts. (She never asked me about it!) Adolf himself, however, realized that he would have to offer Stefanie a secure existence if he wanted to ask for her hand.

Yet this still unresolved and, given my friend's nature, also unresolvable relationship with Stefanie was only one reason among many that moved him to move away from Linz, albeit the most personal and therefore also the most decisive reason, which was thrown into the balance again and again whenever new obstacles stood in the way, probably also because I was the only one who knew this secret and Adolf could therefore talk to no one else about it. At the same time, however, he was concerned with escaping the domestic environment. The thought of being a young...

To continue being supported by his mother as a man of eighteen years had become unbearable for him. Adolf stood here in a painful conflict, from which, as I was often able to convince myself, he suffered almost physically. On the one hand, he loved his mother above all else. She was the only person on earth to whom he felt he completely belonged, a relationship that was reciprocated by the mother with equal love, however deep the concern she felt precisely because of the unusual talents she recognized in her son, which occasionally also filled her with pride, as evidenced by the remark: "He has certainly turned out differently." On the other hand, however, she still felt obligated to fulfill the will of her deceased husband and to set Adolf on a secure career path. But what was considered "secure" given the particular nature of her son? He had failed in school and rejected his mother's intentions and suggestions. He wanted to become a painter, he had explained to her. The mother could not imagine anything satisfying in that; for in her simple nature, everything that had to do with art and artists appeared unsound and frivolous. Adolf tried to change her mind by telling her about the planned academic training. That sounded a bit better. After all, this academy, of which Adolf spoke with increasing enthusiasm, was a kind of school. Perhaps he could make up there for what he had missed in the Realschule, the mother thought. During these domestic conversations, I was repeatedly amazed at the empathy and patience with which Adolf tried to convince his mother of his artistic calling. He never became indignant or violent, as he so often did otherwise. Many a time, Frau Klara also poured out her heart to me about it. In her eyes, I was likewise an artistically inclined young man with high goals. Because music was personally much closer to her than her own son's attempts at drawing and painting, she not infrequently found my views more convincing than Adolf's, who was very grateful to me for this help. But there was one decisive difference for Frau Klara between Adolf and me: I had taken up a solid trade, completed my apprenticeship, and passed the journeyman's examination. If the uncertain little ship of life ever began to falter, I at least had a safe harbor. Adolf, however, was steering completely into the unknown. This thought tormented the mother incessantly. Nevertheless, he succeeded in convincing her of the necessity of his decision to go to the academy and train as a painter. I still remember exactly how happy Adolf was about it. "Now mother is no longer putting anything in my way," he declared to me one day. "At the beginning of September, I am going to Vienna for good." Adolf had also spoken with his mother about the financial side of this undertaking. The costs of the cost of living as well as his studies were to be covered by the small inheritance that had been awarded to him after his father's death and was conscientiously administered by his guardian. With the most frugal management, Adolf hoped to get by with it for about a year. What would happen after that would then follow naturally, he thought. Perhaps by then he could already earn some extra money by selling drawings and paintings.

His brother-in-law Raubal was the main opponent of this plan; from the limited perspective of a minor tax official, he was incapable of understanding Adolf's thoughts. That was crazy stuff, he declared. It was high time that Adolf learned something respectable. After violent scenes in which he, although much older than Adolf, had come off second best, Raubal avoided any direct discussion. But he tried all the more stubbornly to influence the mother. Adolf usually asked the "little one," as he called his sister, who was eleven at the time, about this. When Paula told him that Raubal had been to see their mother, Adolf would fly into a rage. "This Pharisee is making my parental home loathsome to me!" he once said angrily to me. Apparently, Raubal had also been in touch with the guardian, for one day the honest farmer Mayrhofer, who would have liked best to make a baker out of Adolf and had already found an apprenticeship for him, came in from Leonding to consult with the mother. Adolf feared that the guardian might ultimately persuade the mother to refuse to release the inheritance to him. This would have made the planned move to Vienna impossible. But it did not come to that, although the decision hung in the balance for a while. At the end of this tough struggle, everything was against Adolf. Even, as is common in apartment buildings, the other tenants. Frau Klara listened to the more or less well-intentioned gossip and, out of worry and grief for Adolf, often did not know which way to turn. How often did I sit with Frau Klara in the small kitchen back then, when Adolf had his critical depressions and ran through the woods alone, listening with a moved heart to her lament and trying my hand at the difficult experiment of comforting this careworn woman without doing my friend an injustice—on the contrary, to facilitate the execution of his decision through my intervention. I could well empathize with Adolf. How easy it would have been for him, with his great vital energy, to simply pack up and go, had not consideration for his mother prevented him from doing so. The petty-bourgeois world in which he had to live had become hateful to him in his heart of hearts. It cost him an effort of will to return to this narrow, restricted world after hours spent alone in nature. Everything inside him was boiling

Stefanie, Adolf Hitler's youth love. The photograph represents the graduation picture.



Hohe k k Finanz Direktion!

Die ehrfurchtsvoll Gefertigten
bitten hiermit um gütige Zu-
weisung der ihnen gebührenden
Waisenpension. Beide Geschwister
nach ihrer Mutter, der k.k. Zoll
Oberoffizials Witwe am 21 Dezemb.
1907 durch Tod verloren, sind hiermit
ganz vermögenslos, minderjährig und
unfähig sich ihren Unterhalt selbst
zu verdienen. Die Vormundschaft
über beide Geschwister, von denen
Adolf Hitler am 20 April 1889 zu Braunau a/I,
Paula Hitler am 21 Jänner 1896 zu
Fischlham b. Lambach Ob. Öst. geboren ist,
führt Herr Josef Mayrhofer in
Leonding b. Linz. Beide Geschwi-
ster sind nach Linz zuständig.
Wiederholen ihre Bitte ehrfurchts-
voll

Adolf Hitler Paula Hitler

Urfahr den 10 Februar
1908

High k. k. Finance Directorate!

The undersigned respectfully request the gracious granting of the orphan's pension due to them. Both siblings, as children of the k. k. Customs Official's widow who died on December 21, 1907, are completely without means, minors, and unable to support themselves. The guardianship of both siblings, of whom Adolf Hitler was born on April 20, 1889, and Paula Hitler on January 21, 1896, in Fischlham near Lambach, Upper Austria, is held by Mr. Josef Mayrhofer in Leonding near Linz. Both applications are pending in Linz.

Repeating their request most submissively,

Urfahr, February 10, 1908 *Adolf Hitler* *Paula Hitler*

Handwritten petition by Adolf Hitler for the granting of an orphan's pension for himself and his sister Paula

and fermented. He was hard and unapproachable. I did not have it easy with him during these weeks. But the shared secret regarding Stefanie bound us inseparably together. The lovely magic that emanated from her, the unattainable one, soothed the stormy waves. Thus, everything remained in a state of uncertainty for a long time due to the mother's easy suggestibility, even though the decision had long since been made for Adolf.

But on the other side, Vienna beckoned. This city held a thousand possibilities for a young, open-minded person like Adolf, possibilities that could lead just as easily to the highest peaks of existence as into the darkest abysses of being lost. This Vienna was a magnificent and at the same time cruel city, promising everything and denying everything. It demanded the highest commitment from everyone who dedicated themselves to it. That was what Adolf wanted.

Without a doubt, the example of his father was before his eyes. What would have become of him if he had not come to Vienna? A poor, emaciated cobbler somewhere in the poorest Waldviertel. And what had Vienna made of this poor, orphaned cobbler's apprentice!

Since his first stay in Vienna during the early summer of 1906, these still very vague ideas had taken concrete shape. Anyone who had consecrated their life to art could only develop their abilities in Vienna; for in this city, the most perfect achievements in all fields of art were concentrated.

During his first temporary visit to Vienna, Adolf had visited the Court Opera and seen "The Flying Dutchman," "Tristan," and "Lohengrin" there. Measured by this standard, the performances of the Linz Landestheater sank into provincial inadequacy. In Vienna, the Burgtheater with its classical productions awaited the enthusiastic young man. There, the Vienna Philharmonic gave their concerts, that orchestra which at that time was rightly regarded as the best in the world. Added to this were the museums with their immeasurable treasures, the picture galleries, the great Court Library—unprecedented opportunities to enrich and further educate oneself.

Linz no longer had much to offer Adolf. Whatever was to be changed architecturally in this city, he had already rebuilt in his own way. There were no more great, enticing tasks for him. He could have me report to him about individual changes in the cityscape, such as the new building of the Bank for Upper Austria and Salzburg on the main square and the planned new building of the Landestheater. But he now wanted to have greater things before his eyes, the magnificent buildings of the Vienna city center—the spacious, truly imperial layout of the Ringstraße instead of the bourgeois-restricted Landstraße in Linz. Added to this was the fact that his growing interest in politics in...

Linz could provide no field of activity. In this fundamentally conservative "farmer's town," political life ran in quiet channels. Absolutely nothing happened that could interest a young person politically. There were no tensions, no conflicts, no unrest. To move from this absolute dead calm into the center of the storm bore all the hallmarks of a great adventure. In Vienna, the energies of the Danube state were concentrated. Thirteen nations fought there for their national existence and freedom. This struggle of nationalities created a downright volcanic atmosphere. To place oneself in the midst of this, to take a direct part in this struggle, to participate in the fight of all against all—how that must have moved a young heart!

Finally, the time had come. Adolf came to me in the workshop, beaming with joy. We had our hands full just then because my father had received an order to manufacture mattresses for a newly established sanatorium. "I'm leaving tomorrow!" he declared to me briefly. He asked me, if possible, to accompany him to the station, for he did not want his mother to come there. I knew how embarrassing it would be for Adolf to have to say goodbye to his mother in front of other people. He loathed nothing more than a public display of feelings. I promised him to come along and to help him with the transport of the suitcase.

The next day at the agreed hour, I made myself free and went to Blütengasse to pick up my friend. Adolf had already prepared everything. I took the suitcase, which was quite heavy because Adolf could not part with his favorite books, and left quickly so as not to have to be a witness to the farewell. But it could not be entirely avoided. The mother wept; little Paula, whom Adolf had cared for very little, sobbed heartrendingly. When Adolf then caught up with me on the stairs and reached for the suitcase to help me, I saw that he too had wet eyes. We took the tramway to the station. No real conversation could be struck up anymore. As it often is when one must hide feelings, we spoke only of trivial things. The parting from Adolf went very much to my heart. I still remember how miserable I felt when I then had to go home alone. It was good that so much work was waiting for me in the workshop.

Unfortunately, the correspondence I carried on with Adolf at that time has been lost. I only know that I remained without news from him for several weeks. But precisely then I felt particularly clearly what he meant to me. Other young people of the same age did not interest me. I knew in advance that I would only experience disappointments there. For what interested these boys other than shallow, superficial activities! Adolf was much more serious, more mature than most people of his age. His interests were more diverse, and his passionate involvement had swept me along as well. I felt very lonely now and was deathly unhappy. To free myself from this bitter feeling, I went to Urfahr to Blütengasse to see Frau Klara. If I could speak with someone who was attached to Adolf with such great love, my heart would immediately feel lighter. Presumably, Adolf had already written to his mother, for fourteen days had already passed since his departure. Then I could get his address and report to him, as instructed, what had happened in the meantime.

In itself, it wasn't much. But for Adolf, every trifle was important. I had seen Stefanie at the Schmiedtoreck. She was indeed surprised to see me standing there alone, for she was well enough informed about the two of us to know that I was only a secondary figure in this love affair. But the main person was missing. That alienated her. How was she to explain that to herself? Even if Adolf was only a silent admirer, he was nevertheless more tenacious and persistent than all the others. She did not want to miss this loyal admirer. Her questioning look had struck me so suddenly that I had been close to speaking to her. But on the one hand, Stefanie was not alone, but was, as always, accompanied by her mother; on the other hand, my friend had expressly ordered me to wait until Stefanie herself would ask me. Surely, as soon as she had convinced herself of his permanent absence, she would come running across the bridge alone at the next best opportunity to implore me with stormy words as to what had happened to my friend. Something might have happened to him; perhaps he was ill again, as he had been two years ago, or had even died. Unthinkable! Nevertheless, even if this discussion had not yet taken place, I had enough material to fill four pages of a letter.

But what was wrong with Adolf? Not a line came from him. Frau Klara opened the door for me and greeted me warmly. I could tell that she had been waiting for me longingly. "Do you have news from Adolf?" she asked me at the door. So he had not yet written to his mother either. This worried me greatly. Something unusual must have happened. Perhaps everything in Vienna had not gone according to his wishes after all?

Frau Klara offered me a chair. I saw how good it did her to be able to pour her heart out to me. Oh, the old complaint, which I already knew by heart, word for word! But I listened patiently: "If he had studied properly at the Realschule, he could soon be taking his Matura now. But he won't be told anything." She added literally: "He is the same blockhead as his father." — "What is the meaning of this rushed trip to Vienna?

Instead of keeping the small inheritance together, it is being recklessly squandered. And then what? With the painting, that will come to nothing. And story-writing doesn't bring in anything either. I won't be able to help him then. I still have the little one, after all. You know yourself what a frail child she is. And yet she is supposed to learn something proper. But Adolf doesn't think of that. He continues on his way as if he were alone in the world. I will not live to see him create an independent existence for himself..."

Frau Klara seemed more troubled to me than usual. Deep furrows stood in her countenance. Her eyes were veiled, her voice sounded tired and resigned. I had the impression that now that Adolf was no longer with her, she let herself go completely and looked older and more sickly than usual. Certainly, to make the parting easier for her son, she had hidden from him how things stood with her. Perhaps Adolf's impulsive nature had also kept her own vitality awake. But now that she was alone, she appeared to me as an old, sick woman.

What the following weeks brought, I have unfortunately forgotten. Adolf had briefly informed me of his address. He lived in the sixth district at Stumpergasse 29, second staircase, second floor, door 17, with a woman with the strange name Zakreys. That was all he wrote to me. But I sensed that behind this persistent silence more was hidden than he let on; for I knew that when Adolf was silent, it usually only meant that he was too proud to speak about it.

I therefore stick to what Adolf himself reported in his book regarding the description of his second stay in Vienna, a report which, according to consistent judgments, completely coincides with the truth:

> "...I had traveled to Vienna to take the entrance examination for the Academy. Equipped with a thick pack of drawings, I had set out at that time, convinced that I could pass the exam with ease. In the Realschule, I had already been by far the best draftsman in my class; since then, my ability had developed even more extraordinarily, so that my own satisfaction let me hope for the best, proud and happy...
>
> So now I was in the beautiful city for the second time and waited with burning impatience, but also proud confidence, for the result of my entrance examination. I was so convinced of success that the rejection announced to me hit me like a sudden blow from the blue. And yet it was so. When I had myself introduced to the Rector and presented the request for an explanation of the reasons for my non-admission to the general painting school of the Academy, the gentleman assured me that from the drawings I had brought with me, my unsuitability as a painter was clearly evident,

but that my talent clearly lay in the field of architecture; for me, the school of painting would never be an option, only the Academy's school of architecture. That I had neither attended a building school nor received any other instruction in architecture until then was something they simply could not understand at first.

Beaten, I left Hansen's magnificent building on Schillerplatz, for the first time in my young life at odds with myself. For what I had heard about my talent now seemed to me, like a sudden flash of lightning, to reveal a conflict from which I had long suffered without having been able to give myself a clear account of the why and wherefore.

In a few days, I now knew for myself that I would one day become a master builder.

Admittedly, the path was incredibly difficult; for what I had neglected out of defiance in the Realschule was now to take a bitter revenge. Attendance at the Academy's school of architecture was dependent on attending the technical building school, and entry into the latter required a previously completed Matura at a secondary school. I lacked all of this completely. By all human reckoning, therefore, a fulfillment of my artist's dream was no longer possible."

He had been rejected at the Academy, had failed even before he had properly gained a foothold in Vienna. Nothing more terrible could have happened to him. But he was too proud to speak about it. So he concealed from me what had occurred. He also concealed it from his mother. When we met again later, he had already somewhat overcome this harsh decision. He spoke not another word of it. I respected his silence and did not question him about it, because I well suspected that something had not gone according to his will. It was only in the following year, when we were in Vienna together, that these connections gradually revealed themselves to me.

Adolf's talent for architecture was so obvious that it would have justified an exception — how many significantly less talented students could one find at the Academy! This decision was therefore as one-sided and bureaucratic as it was unjust. Typical, however, is Adolf's reaction to this treatment, which was shameful for him. No attempt to achieve an exceptional position, no humiliation before people who did not understand him, but also no rebellion, no defiance; rather, a radical inward turn, a stubborn determination to cope even with this heavy blow of fate, a bitter "Now more than ever!", which he hurled to himself at the gentlemen on Schillerplatz, just as he had settled accounts with his teachers two years earlier. Whatever disappointments life brought him only became an incentive for him to defy all resistance and to continue on the path he had chosen with even greater determination.

In the book "Mein Kampf" stands the sentence: "As the Goddess of Hardship took me into her arms and often threatened to break me, the will to resist grew, and finally, the will remained the victor."

DEATH OF THE MOTHER

I remember that Adolf's mother had to undergo a serious operation as early as the beginning of 1907. At that time, she was in the Hospital of the Sisters of Mercy in Herrenstraße, where he visited her daily. The operation was performed by the then chief physician, Dr. Urban. I no longer remember exactly what the illness was, presumably breast cancer. Frau Klara recovered to the extent that she was able to manage her household again, but she remained very weak and frail and repeatedly had to take to her bed. However, a few weeks after Adolf had moved to Vienna, she seemed to be doing better again, for to my astonishment, I happened to meet her one morning on the Promenade, where the market was still held at that time and the farm women from the surrounding area of the city sold eggs, butter, and vegetables.

"Adolf is doing well," she told me joyfully, "if only I knew what he is actually studying. Unfortunately, he writes nothing about it. But it stands to reason that he has a lot to do." That was good news, which also made me happy, for Adolf had written nothing to me about his activities in Vienna. Our correspondence revolved mainly around "Benkieser," which meant Stefanie. But the mother was not allowed to know anything about that. I asked Frau Klara how she was doing. She was unfortunately not doing well at all, she explained. She had very severe pain and often could no longer sleep at night. But I should not write anything to Adolf about it. Perhaps her condition would improve again. Upon saying goodbye, she invited me to visit her soon.

In the workshop, there was a lot to do at that time. Never before had business gone as well as in this year. Order after order came in. For a newly built wing of the women's clinic, we had to deliver fifty complete beds. Despite the heavy workload, I used every free hour for my musical further education. I was active as a violist both in the string orchestra of the music society and in the large symphony orchestra. So the weeks passed, and I believe it was already late in November when I finally got around to visiting Frau Hitler. I was shocked when I saw her again. How withered and decayed this dear, kind face looked. From the bed, she stretched out her slender, pale hand toward me. Little Paula pushed a chair to the bed for me. She immediately began to [talk] about Adolf...

speak and was happy about the confident tone of his letters. I asked her if she had informed him about her illness. If it were a burden for her to write to Adolf, I would do it. But she immediately and decisively refused. If her condition did not improve, she explained, she would probably have no choice but to call Adolf back from Vienna. Of course, she would be sorry to tear him away from his strenuous occupation, but what was she to do? The little one had to go to school every day, Angela had enough worries of her own (she was expecting her second child at the time), and she could not count on her son-in-law Raubal at all. Since she had taken Adolf's side against him and defended his decision to go to Vienna, Raubal had been resentful and no longer showed his face. He also prevented Angela, his wife, from taking care of her. So there was probably nothing left for her but to go to the hospital, as the doctor had advised her. The Hitler family's doctor was the universally popular Doctor Bloch, whom people in the city called the "doctor of the poor," an outstanding specialist and a kind-hearted man who sacrificed himself for his patients. If Doctor Bloch advised Mrs. Hitler to go to the hospital, things must have been very serious for her. I wondered if it were not my duty after all to inform Adolf. Mrs. Klara told me how terrible it was for her that Adolf was so far away from her. Never before had I felt as clearly as during this visit how much she was attached to her son. Whatever strength and life remained in her was devoted to worrying about him. Perhaps during these weeks of suffering, as she tormented herself through the nights with thoughts of him, she sensed that because of his special talents, an unusual fate lay ahead of him. Finally, she promised me to inform Adolf of her condition. When I said goodbye to Mrs. Klara that evening, I was very dissatisfied with myself. Was there really no way to help this poor woman? I knew, after all, how much Adolf was attached to his mother. Something had to happen. Little Paula was too timid, too clumsy, if the mother really needed help. Having arrived home, I spoke with my mother. She immediately declared herself ready to check on Mrs. Hitler every now and then, even though she did not know her at all. But my father contradicted this decision, finding it improper in his precise, over-correct way to offer his services unasked. After a few days, I went to Mrs. Klara again. I found her out of bed, busy in the kitchen. She felt a little better, and so she immediately regretted having informed Adolf about her illness. That evening I sat with her for a long time. Mrs. Klara was more talkative today than usual and began, quite contrary to her nature, to tell me about her own life. Some things I understood, some I sensed, even if most of it remained unspoken, yet it revealed itself to me, the then nineteen-year-old, who still looked forward to life so confidently and expectantly, a heavy fate in life. —

But in the workshop, work was pressing. The deadline for the delivery of the ordered beds was near and had to be strictly met. My father knew no leniency. Also regarding my artistic ambitions, it was always: work first — then music. Since a major performance was also imminent, there was one orchestra rehearsal after another. I really didn't know at times how I was supposed to manage my time. Then one morning, just as I was zealously filling the mattresses, Adolf stood in the workshop. He looked wretched. His face was of an almost transparent paleness, his eyes were dull, his voice sounded hoarse. But I felt what a storm of sudden pain was hidden behind this icy demeanor. He gave the impression as if he had to fight against an adverse fate.

Hardly a greeting, no question about Stefanie, not a word about what he had experienced in Vienna.

"Incurable, says the doctor," this was all Adolf brought forth. I was startled by this unambiguous diagnosis. He had probably been informed by Doctor Bloch about his mother's condition. Perhaps he had consulted another doctor. But he could not reconcile himself to this harsh judgment.

Fire came into his eyes. Anger flashed. "Incurable — what does that mean?" he blurted out. "Not that the suffering is incurable, but only that the doctors are unable to cure it. My mother is not old at all. Forty-seven years is certainly not an age at which one must necessarily die. But as soon as the doctors are at the end of their wisdom, it is immediately called incurable. Perhaps if my mother lived in a later, more progressive era and had to suffer from the same illness, she could be cured."

I knew my friend's peculiarity of making a problem out of everything he encountered in life. But never before had he spoken with such bitterness, such passionate involvement as now. It suddenly seemed to me as if Adolf, pale, agitated, stirred to his innermost core, stood directly opposite Death, who demanded his victim harshly and cruelly, and had to argue and settle accounts with him.

I asked Adolf if he needed my help. He ignored the question, so much did this confrontation occupy him. Then he suddenly broke off the conversation and declared in a sober, factual voice: "I am staying in Linz to run the household for my mother." — "Can you even do that?" I asked. "One can do anything, if it must be." With that, the conversation over. I accompanied Adolf to the front of the house. Surely he will now inquire about Stefanie, I thought; perhaps he did not want to ask about her in the workshop. I would have been very happy about it, for I had carried out my observations conscientiously and could, even if the expected discussion had not taken place, tell much about her. Furthermore, I hoped that Adolf, in his terrible mental distress, would find comfort in the thought of Stefanie. Certainly, it was so. Surely Stefanie meant more to him in these difficult weeks than ever before. But he pushed every word about her back into his heart, so much did the concern for his mother stand in the foreground of his thoughts and actions.

I can no longer precisely determine the point in time when Adolf returned from Vienna in my memory. Perhaps it was one of the last days of November, perhaps December had already begun. But the weeks that followed will remain indelibly in my memory. In a certain sense, they were the most beautiful, most intimate weeks of our friendship. How much these days moved me I can gather alone from the fact that from no other period of my time together with my friend have so many details remained in my memory. He was as if transformed. I had previously believed I knew him thoroughly and from all sides. After all, we had already lived for over three years in a close friendship that excluded every other connection, in which nothing had remained hidden. Yet in these weeks, it seemed to me as if my friend had suddenly become a completely different person.

Nothing more of the questions and ideas that had otherwise moved him so vehemently. All thoughts of politics extinguished! Even of his artistic interests, there was hardly a trace to be felt. He was nothing more than the faithful, helpful son of his mother.

I had not taken Adolf's announcement that he would henceforth take over the household in Blütenstraße very seriously. I knew, after all, how disparagingly Adolf thought of these activities, which were necessary in themselves but thoroughly bleak and monotonous. So I was also skeptical regarding this intention and thought to myself that it would remain at a few attempts.

But I had been thoroughly mistaken. I simply knew Adolf too little from this side and had not taken into account that the boundless love for his mother enabled him to perform even these unaccustomed domestic chores, previously disdained by him, so well that his mother could not praise him enough. Thus, I found Adolf one day, when I came to Blütenstraße, kneeling on the floor. He had tied on a blue work apron and was scrubbing the floor, which had not been washed for a long time kitchen floor. I was truly beyond astonishment and must have made a very distressed face, for Frau Klara smiled happily amidst her pain and said, turning to me: "Look at that, won't you, what all Adolf can do!" I noticed now that Adolf had also rearranged the furniture. The mother's bed was now in the kitchen because it was heated during the day, so that the sick woman was always warm. Adolf had pushed the kitchen sideboard into the living room and moved the ottoman, on which he slept, into the space that had become free. In this way, he could always be near his mother at night as well. The little one slept in the living room. I could not help asking how he was getting on with the cooking. "As soon as I'm finished with the grating, you can see for yourself," Adolf said. But Frau Klara anticipated my judgment. Every morning she discusses with Adolf what should be cooked for lunch, she explained to me. He insists on always choosing her favorite dishes. It tastes wonderful to her, Frau Klara claimed; she had not eaten with such an appetite for a long time, not since the days Adolf had been with her.

I looked at Frau Klara, who had sat up in bed. In the eagerness of speaking, her otherwise pale cheeks had reddened a little. The joy over the return of her son and his devoted care for her transfigured the serious, haggard face. Yet behind this maternal joy stood the unmistakable signs of suffering. The deep furrows around the mouth that had become thin, the eyes lying in deep hollows, betrayed how correct the doctor's diagnosis was.

Actually, I should have known that my friend would not fail even in this task, which was certainly unusual for him, because whatever he did, he did completely. In view of the seriousness with which he took over the management of the household, every mocking remark stuck in my throat, however comical Adolf—who otherwise placed so much value on scrupulously precise, neat clothing—looked in his coarse work garments with the apron tied around him. I could not even bring an appreciative word to my lips, so much did his changed attitude touch me, for I knew well how much self-overcoming the execution of these tasks cost him.

The mother's condition was quite changeable. The presence of her son was in any case a good influence on her general well-being; it also brightened her darkened spirit. In the afternoon hours, she was even out of bed sometimes and sat in the comfortable armchair in the kitchen. Adolf read every wish from her eyes and attended to her with the most tender care. I had never before discovered this so lovingly empathetic tenderness in him. I thought I could not trust my eyes and ears. No more harsh words, no unwilling...

expression, no violent assertion of his own point of view. During these weeks, he had completely forgotten himself and lived only in the self-sacrificing care for his mother. Although Adolf, as Frau Klara repeatedly claimed, had inherited many of his father's traits, I felt clearly during these decisive weeks how similar he was to his mother in the innermost depths of his being. Certainly, the external circumstance that he had spent the last four years alone with his mother may have contributed to this. But beyond that, a unique spiritual harmony between mother and son revealed itself to me, such as I have never encountered again in my life.

Everything that separated them remained far behind. Adolf never spoke of the disappointment he had experienced in Vienna. In general, all worries about the future seemed to be extinguished during this time. An atmosphere of relaxed, almost cheerful contentment surrounded the one marked by death.

Adolf, too, seemed to have forgotten everything that weighed upon him. Only once, as I remember, did he accompany me to the door after I had said goodbye to Frau Klara and asked me if I had seen Stefanie. But there was a different tone in this question now. No longer the impatience of the stormy lover, but the secret fear of a young person who fears that fate might also take from him the last thing that was dear to him in life. I felt from this hastily uttered question how much this girl meant to him, especially in these days that were so difficult for him, perhaps more than if she had actually been as close to him as he yearned for. I reassured him. I had met Stefanie several times with her mother when I crossed the bridge. Apparently, nothing had changed with her.

December was cold and unfriendly. For days, damp, gloomy fog lay over the Danube. The sun hardly broke through. And if it did happen, its rays were powerless and gave little warmth. The mother's condition deteriorated visibly. Adolf advised me to come only every other day.

But Frau Klara greeted me whenever I entered the kitchen by raising her hand slightly and stretching it out toward me. Then a secret smile would sometimes flit across her painfully distorted features. A small, very significant incident has remained in my memory. While looking through the school notebooks, Adolf had discovered that little Paula was not studying as diligently in school as her mother could expect of her. Adolf took the little girl by the hand and led her to the mother's bed; then she had to give the mother her hand and solemnly promise to always be diligent and to become a proper student. Perhaps with this little scene, Adolf wanted to tell his mother that he, in the meantime, his own mistakes realized. Had he attended the Realschule until his Matura, the catastrophe in Vienna would not have occurred. Certainly, this event, so decisive for him—of which he later said that it had for the first time in his life made him at odds with himself—stood in the background of the terrible happenings and darkened his mind even further.

When I returned to Blütengasse two days later and secretly knocked on the door, Adolf opened it immediately, stepped out to me in the hallway, and pulled the door shut behind him. His mother was not doing well at all, he told me; she was in terrible pain. Even more than his words, his deep emotion convinced me of the seriousness of the situation. I realized it would be better to leave. Adolf agreed with me. We pressed each other's hands in silence, then I left.

Christmas was already near. Finally, it had snowed, and the city had taken on a festive appearance. Only I myself was not in a Christmas mood at all. I walked across the Danube bridge over to Urfahr. I learned from the residents of the house that Frau Hitler had already received the Last Rites. I wanted to make my visit as short as possible. At my knock, little Paula opened the door. Hesitantly, I entered. Frau Klara sat in bed; Adolf had placed his arm around her back to help her, for as soon as she could sit up, the terrible pain subsided somewhat.

I offered my greetings and remained standing by the door. Adolf gave me a sign to leave. I was already reaching for the handle when Frau Klara beckoned to me and stretched out her hand. The words that the dying woman spoke to me then in a soft, barely audible voice have remained indelibly impressed upon me. "Gustl," she said—she usually only ever called me "Mr. Kubizek," but in this hour she used the name that Adolf used for me—"remain a good friend to my son, even when I am no longer here. He has no one else."

I promised it with tears in my eyes, then I left. This was on the evening of the twentieth of December.

The next day, Adolf came to our apartment in the afternoon. The workshop had already been closed because of the approaching Christmas holidays. Adolf looked very worn out. It was enough to see his distraught face to know what had happened.

In the early morning hours, his mother had passed away, he explained. Her last wish had been to be buried next to her husband in Leonding. Adolf could hardly speak, so deeply had the loss of his mother shaken him.

My parents expressed their sympathy to him. But my mother saw, that it would be best to attend to the practical matters immediately. The burial had to be arranged. Adolf had already spoken with the Winkler funeral home. The funeral had been scheduled there for December twenty-third at nine o'clock in the morning. But there was still much to do. The transfer of the mother to Leonding required its own arrangement. The necessary documents had to be procured, and the funeral notices printed. In this way, Adolf also overcame the emotional shock. Composed, he directed the necessary preparations for the funeral on this and the following day.

On the morning of December 23, 1907, I went over to the house of mourning with my mother before the appointed hour. The weather had turned again. Snow was sliding off the roofs. In the streets lay a wet, slippery slush. The morning was damp and shrouded in mist. The dark waters of the river could hardly be seen.

We entered the apartment to bid farewell to the deceased with a few flowers, according to the prevailing custom. Frau Klara had been laid out on her bed. Over her waxen-pale face lay a transfigured shimmer. I felt for the deceased that death had been a release for her, freeing her from her cruel pains. Little Paula sobbed; Adolf maintained his composure. But a glance at his features was enough to see what he suffered during these hours. It was not just the fact that Adolf was now a double orphan that had struck him so deeply; he was even more shaken by the fact that with his mother, he lost the only being on earth on whom his love was concentrated and who had returned it to him just as completely.

I went down to the street with my mother. The priest arrived. The deceased had been placed in the coffin. Now it was set down in the hallway. The priest blessed the deceased, then the small funeral procession set off. Mists rolled in from the Danube. A gray, gloomy picture, a mood full of melancholy and grief, as was appropriate for this event. Adolf walked behind his mother's coffin. He wore his long, black winter coat, black gloves, and in his hand, as was customary at the time, a black top hat. The dark clothing made his face appear even paler. He was serious and composed. To the left walked his brother-in-law Raubal, also dressed in dark clothes; in the middle was eleven-year-old Paula; Angela, who was already in an advanced state of pregnancy in those days, sat in a closed one-horse carriage that followed the mourners. Perhaps this circumstance, that a carriage drove right behind the next of kin, contributed to the fact that the entire funeral procession made such a desolate impression on me. Besides my mother and me, there followed only some residents of the house at Blütengasse 9 followed the coffin, as did some neighbors and acquaintances from the former apartment on Humboldtstraße. My mother also felt how meager this burial was, but in her kind way, she immediately defended the people who had not come to the funeral. Tomorrow was Christmas, after all, she explained to me, and even with the best will in the world, it would really not be possible for many women to get away.

At the church gates, the coffin was lifted from the carriage and carried into the interior of the church. Following the Requiem Mass, the second blessing took place. Since the deceased was to be transferred to Leonding, the coffin was led in a funeral procession to Urfahrer Hauptstraße. The church bells rang as the small procession approached the main street. Involuntarily, I looked up at the windows of the house where Stefanie lived. Had my most fervent wish—that in this most difficult hour she might not forget my friend—summoned her? I can still see how the casements opened up there at the familiar window, how a girl's figure stepped forward to the parapet, and how Stefanie looked down sympathetically at the small funeral procession. I looked over at Adolf. His countenance remained unchanged. Yet I did not doubt that he, too, had seen Stefanie. As he told me later, it was indeed so, and he confessed to me how much the sight of his beloved had comforted him in this painful hour. Was it intentional, was it coincidence, that Stefanie stepped to the window at that moment? I am unable to say. Perhaps she had only heard the church bells and wanted to see what this ringing at such an early hour meant. Adolf, of course, was convinced that she wanted to express her sympathy to him by her appearance.

On the main street, a second closed one-horse carriage was waiting, in which Adolf now took his place with his sister Paula as the funeral procession dispersed. Raubal climbed into the carriage with his wife. Then the hearse drove out with the two one-horse carriages to Leonding for the burial.

The next day, the twenty-fourth of December, Adolf came to our apartment as early as the morning. He looked so worn out that one had to worry he would collapse at any moment. It seemed as if everything inside him was empty and without consolation, and not a spark of life remained in him. He sensed how worried my mother was about him and apologized, saying that he had not slept for nights. He reported that his mother had been buried yesterday in the cemetery of Leonding at the side of his father. Thus, her last wish, to be united with her husband in death, had been fulfilled.

My mother asked him where he intended to spend Christmas Eve.

Adolf said that he and his sister had been invited by the Raubals today. Paula had already gone; whether he could decide to go remained to be seen. My mother urged him, now that everyone had suffered the same heavy loss through the death of his mother, to contribute to ensuring that Christmas peace might be preserved. Adolf listened to my mother's words and remained silent. But when we were alone, he said to me brusquely: "I am not going to Raubal's."

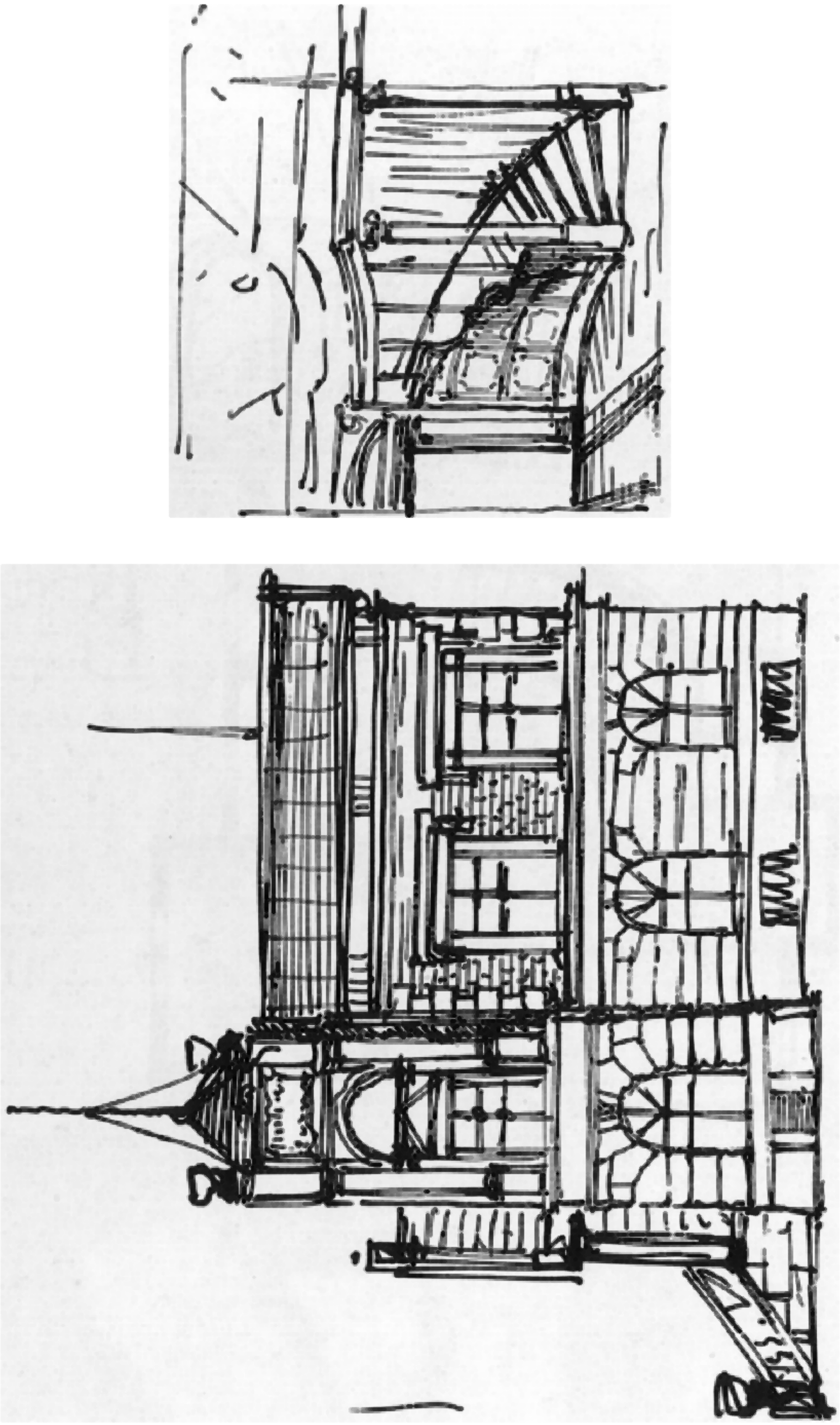
"Where do you want to go then?" I asked excitedly, "today is Christmas Eve, after all."

I wanted to ask him to come to us and take part in our small celebration. But he did not let me finish at all, waving me off energetically despite the grief that dominated him.

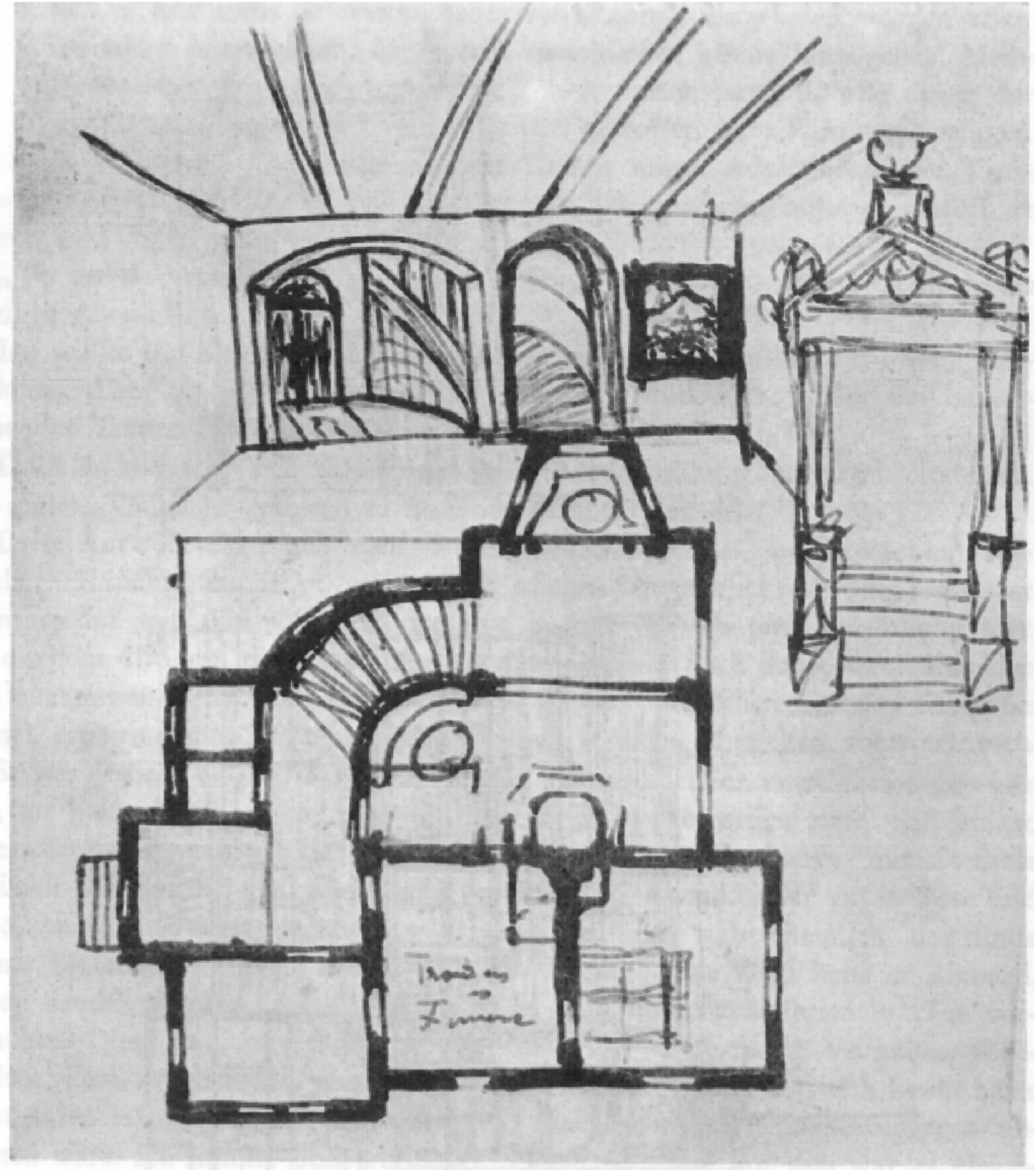
But then he pulled himself together. His eyes suddenly gained a luster. He said: "Perhaps I will go to Stefanie." With that, he left.

This answer corresponded to my friend's nature, in two respects. First, because in such moments he could completely forget that his relationship with Stefanie was only a wish and an imagination, a beautiful illusion, nothing more; and further, because even when he became aware of this upon sober reflection, in such critical hours he preferred to stay with his own daydreams rather than entrust himself to strangers.

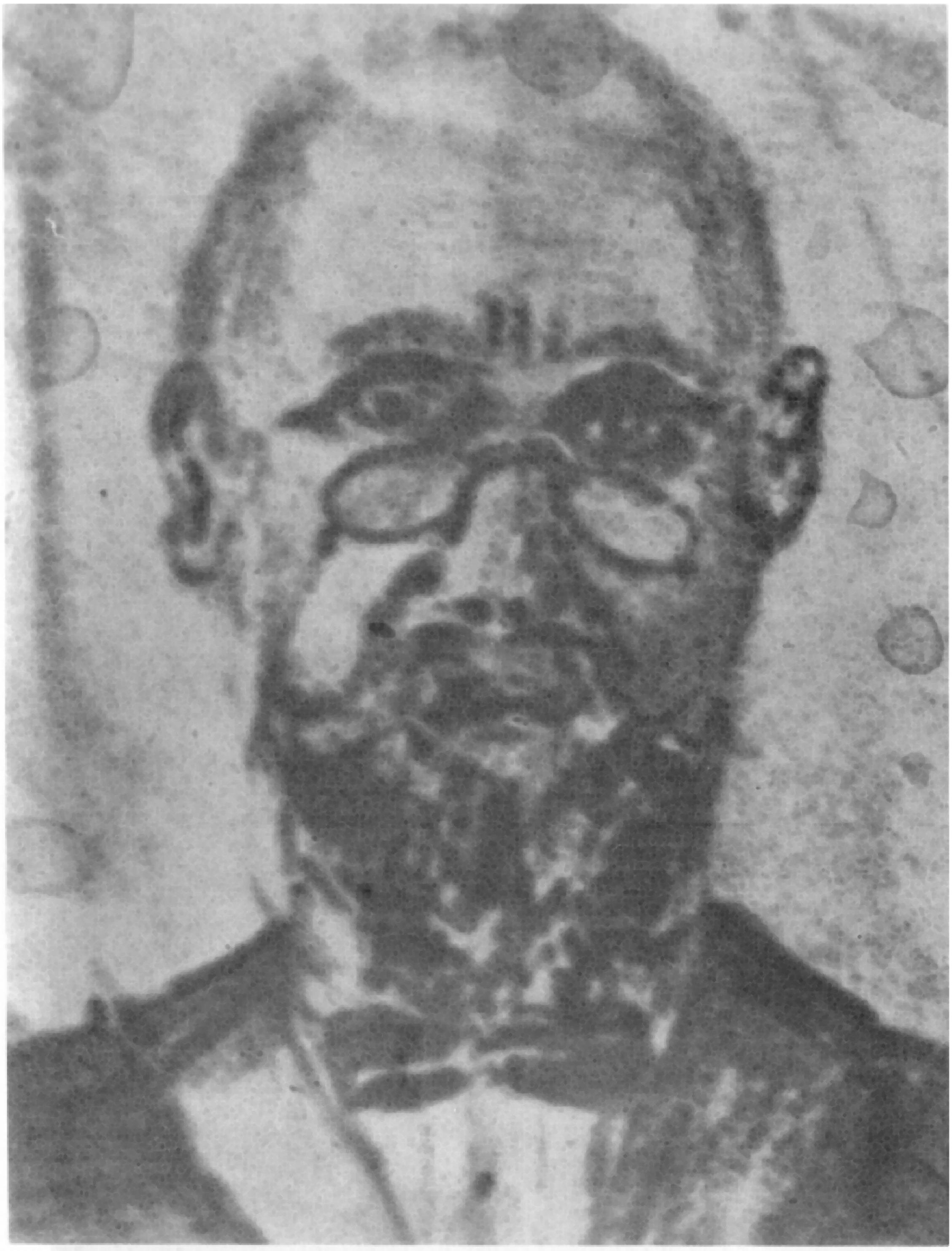
Later he confessed to me that on that evening he had really been determined to go to Stefanie, although it had become completely clear to him that such a rushed visit, completely unannounced, indeed without even being officially acquainted with Stefanie, and on Christmas Eve to boot, would have contradicted every good custom and social convention and would probably have meant the end of his relationship with her. But on the way, he had seen Richard, her brother, who as a university student was spending his Christmas holidays in Linz. This unexpected encounter had deterred him from his plan, for it would have been embarrassing for him if Richard, which could hardly have been avoided, had been present during the intended discussion with Stefanie. I could not and did not want to ask further. In itself, it was irrelevant whether Adolf was deceiving himself with this pretext or whether he only wanted to defend his behavior to me. Certainly, I too had seen Stefanie at the window. The sympathy that had been reflected in her face had surely been genuine. But I doubt very much whether Stefanie had even recognized Adolf in that unusual attire and in that peculiar state. But of course, I did not voice this doubt, because I knew that by doing so I would have robbed my friend of his last confidence and hope.



Drawings by Adolf Hitler. Elevation and design of the staircase of that villa which Hitler wanted to build for his friend. (The originals of these and the following drawings are in the possession of the author)



Sketch of the floor plan of the entrance hall and the portal of the villa intended for his friend. The drawing of the portal is particularly typical. Hitler produced such sketches in large numbers at that time.



Dr. Leopold Pötsch, the history professor at the Realschule of Steyr who was highly revered by Hitler. From the author's estate.

Stefanie, the secret childhood love of Adolf Hitler.
This picture shows her in a ballgown.

I can very well imagine what the bleak Christmas Eve of 1907 actually looked like for my friend. He did not want to go to Raubal's, a decision I could understand. I could also see that Adolf did not want to disturb our small, quiet family Christmas, to which I had invited him, with his presence. The untroubled harmony of our home would have made him feel his solitude, his loneliness, even more clearly. In this respect, I felt like one blessed by fate compared to Adolf, for I possessed everything he had lost: the father who cared for me, the mother who loved me, the quiet home that welcomed me into its peace.

But he? Where was he to go on this Christmas Eve? He had no acquaintances, no friends, no one who would have received him with an open heart. For him, everything remained foreign and empty.

So he went — to Stefanie. That is to say: to his dreams!

Adolf only told me about this Christmas night that he had been out for many hours. Only towards morning did he unlock his mother's apartment and fall asleep there. What he thought, felt, and suffered, he kept from me.

“COME WITH ME, GUSTL!”

How often had this word been spoken in jest when Adolf spoke of his intention to move to Vienna. But when he later realized how much this remark, which he at first had not meant seriously at all, occupied me, he formally familiarized himself with the idea that we would move to Vienna together—he to attend the art school, and I to go to the conservatory. In his magnificent imagination, he painted this life for me in all colors, so vividly and concretely that I often did not know myself whether all this was now merely a wish or already reality. For me, such imagination had a very real background. True, I had learned my trade well and completely satisfied my father and also the customers with what I achieved. But the work in the dusty workshop had affected my health, and the doctor, my secret ally, urgently advised against continuing to employ me as an upholsterer. For me, this meant seeking a professional opportunity in music, to which my whole heart belonged. This wish, however many obstacles might stand in its way, took on increasingly concrete forms. What I could learn in Linz, I had learned. My teachers, too, had encouraged me in the decision to devote myself entirely to music. But this meant, for me, going to Vienna. Thus, my friend's originally so lightly tossed-off “Come with me, Gustl!” took on the character of a clear invitation and a definite goal for me. Nevertheless, I do not believe that, given my less active nature, I would have pushed through this change of profession and the associated move to Vienna if Adolf had not intervened with all determination. In doing so, his friend was certainly thinking of himself first. He dreaded going to Vienna alone, for this was now different from before on his third trip there. Previously, he still had his mother. Even when he went to Vienna, her quiet home was still preserved for him. It was not a step into the unknown or the uncertain, for knowing that his mother was waiting for him and would receive him with open arms at any hour and in any situation, no matter what might have happened, gave his uncertain life a firm anchor on which he could rely. His mother's home was the calm point around which his stormy existence revolved. Now he had lost this anchor. If he now...

...going to Vienna, it was a final, definitive decision from which there was no turning back, a leap into the dark, into the boundless. In the months he had spent in Vienna the previous autumn, he had not succeeded in finding a connection anywhere. Perhaps he had not even looked for one. Relatives of his mother lived in Vienna, with whom he had previously been in contact and with whom he had even lived, if I am not mistaken, during his first stay in Vienna. He never visited them, and even later there was never any talk of it. The reason why he avoided the relatives is understandable. He feared being questioned by them about his work, his livelihood. It would certainly have become known to them that his admission to the Academy had been rejected. He would rather endure hunger and hardship than turn up at his relatives' as a seeker of help. What was more natural, therefore, than to take me with him to Vienna, I who was not only his proven friend but also the only one who shared the secret of his great love. The "Come with me, Gustl!" had, in Adolf's mouth since the death of his mother, taken on the tone of a friendly request.

After New Year 1908, I went with Adolf to the parents' grave in Leonding. It was a beautiful, very cold winter day that has remained well in my memory. Snow covered the old familiar paths. Adolf knew every minute detail here, for this had been his way to school for several years. When we reached the height of the Powder Tower, the houses of Leonding lay below us, clustered closely around the church. Above the wide plain, glistening in the winter snow, stood the mountains, from the Hoher Priel to the Salzburg Untersberg, every peak clearly drawn against the steel-blue sky.

Adolf was very composed. I was amazed at this change. I knew how deeply the death of his mother had shaken him, how he also suffered physically from it, how he had almost collapsed from exhaustion. For the Christmas holidays, my mother had invited him to dinner so that he might at least regain his strength and get away from the empty, unheated apartment where everything reminded him of his mother. He had indeed come to dinner. Very serious, silent, and withdrawn, he had sat at the table. The hour had not yet come to speak with him about future plans.

Even now, as he strode measuredly beside me—he looked much older than I, much more mature, more masculine—he was still entirely occupied with his own affairs. But I was amazed at how clearly and superiorly he now spoke about them. Almost as if it were a matter concerning strangers: Angela had sent word to him that Paula would now stay with them. Her husband agreed to this but refused to take Adolf into the family, as he had behaved insubordinately toward him. With that, his greatest worry...

free, for the little one now had a secure home after all. He himself had never had the intention of placing himself under Raubal's care. He had sent his thanks to Angela and had it explained that all the parental furniture belonged to Paula. The costs of the funeral would be paid from the mother's estate. Furthermore, Angela had given birth yesterday. This, her second child, was a girl, whom she also wanted to name Angela. Moreover, his guardian, the mayor of Leonding, had taken over the settlement of inheritance matters and also wanted to assist him with the granting of the orphan's pension.

That sounded very sober and factual. He then also came to speak about Stefanie. He was determined to end the current state of affairs. At the next opportunity, he would introduce himself to Stefanie and her mother, as this had not been possible during the Christmas days. It was high time to bring about a decision.

We walked through the wintry, snow-covered village. There lay the small one-story property with house number sixty-one, which Adolf's father had bought at the time. The large bee house, of which the father had been so proud, still stood there. Through the sale of the property, everything had passed into foreign hands. Adolf did not know the people who now lived in his father's house. Right next to it lay the cemetery. The father's grave, in which the mother had been buried, was located at the wall facing east. Snow covered the freshly heaped mound, before which we stopped. Adolf stood before it with a serious, motionless expression. His face was hard and stern; no tear moistened his eye. His thoughts were with his beloved mother. I stood beside him and prayed.

On the way home, Adolf explained that he would probably have to stay in Linz for the month of January until the household was finally dissolved and the estate settled. A sharp confrontation with the guardian was still ahead of him. Certainly, the latter had his best interests at heart. But what could that help him if this "best" was merely an apprenticeship with a Leonding master baker?

Old Josef Mayrhofer, Hitler's guardian, who died at a great age in 1956, was naturally often asked about experiences and impressions he had gained of the young Hitler. In his serene, rustic manner, Mayrhofer gave information to all who came to him, first to the opponents, then to the friends, then again to the opponents of his ward. But he said the same thing every time, without worrying about the disposition of the questioner. Whether the times stood this way or that, he therefore did not change a single sentence of his statement.

Once in January of the year 1908, Hitler Adi—already tall for his age at the time, with a dark hint of a mustache on his upper lip and a deep voice, almost a man—is said to have come to him to discuss inheritance matters. But his first sentence was: "Mr. Guardian, I am going back to Vienna." The attempt to talk him out of it failed; he was a stubborn head like his father, the old Hitler.

Josef Mayrhofer also kept the documents relating to those negotiations. The application that Adolf wrote on behalf of the guardian to obtain the orphan's pension for himself and his sister Paula has the following wording:

High Imperial-Royal Finance Directorate!

The respectfully undersigned hereby request the kind allocation of the orphan's pension due to them. Both applicants, who lost their mother, a widow of an Imperial-Royal Senior Customs Official, to death on December 21, 1907, are hereby completely orphaned, minors, and unable to earn their own living. The guardianship over both applicants—of whom Adolf Hitler was born on April 20, 1889, in Braunau am Inn, and Paula Hitler on January 21, 1898, in Fischlham near Lambach, Upper Austria—is held by Mr. Joseph Mayrhofer in Leonding near Linz. Both applicants fall under the jurisdiction of Linz. They respectfully repeat their request.

Urfahr, February 10, 1908 *Adolf Hitler* *Paula Hitler*

Incidentally, Adolf obviously also signed this application for his sister Paula, as the signature in the name "Hitler" shows the same downward-sloping ductus both times, which became so characteristic of Hitler's later signature. Furthermore, Adolf was mistaken about his sister's date of birth. Paula was not born in 1898, but in 1896; he thus made the little one two years younger.

The salary law in force at the time stipulated that orphans who had lost both parents, provided they were unprovided for and had not yet completed their twenty-fourth year of age, were entitled to an orphan's pension in the total amount of half of the widow's pension received by their mother.

After the death of her husband, Mrs. Hitler had received a monthly pension of one hundred crowns. Thus, the two children, Adolf and Paula, who had now become full orphans, were entitled to a total of fifty crowns per month. Accordingly, twenty-five crowns per month fell to Adolf. This was, of course, far too little to live on. For comparison, one might...

I should only mention that Adolf alone had to pay ten crowns monthly rent for the room at Mrs. Zakreys'.

The petition was settled in accordance with the application. The first payment was made on February 12, 1908, when Adolf was already in Vienna. Furthermore, three years later, Adolf waived this pension in favor of his sister Paula, although he would have been entitled to receive this pension until he reached his twenty-fourth year, i.e., until April 1913. This declaration of waiver by Adolf, dated May 4, 1911, is still in the possession of the guardian Josef Mayrhofer in Leonding today.

The inheritance protocol, which Adolf signed before the guardian prior to his departure for Vienna, also contained the claim to the paternal inheritance, which amounted to slightly more than seven hundred crowns. Perhaps he had already consumed part of this amount during his previous stay in Vienna. Given his extremely frugal lifestyle—his only major expenses were for books—he certainly had enough of it left over to be able to get by in Vienna for at least some time.

As far as securing a future existence was concerned, Adolf was ahead of me not only because he possessed a modest amount of cash and a fixed monthly allowance—things I first had to clarify with my parents—but also because now that he had successfully "outplayed" the guardian, he could decide quite freely and unhindered, whereas my decision was dependent on the consent of my parents. Also, for me, a possible move to Vienna involved giving up my learned profession, while Adolf continued his previous life in Vienna in more or less the same form. These circumstances made my decision significantly more difficult; Adolf did not realize this for some time, although he had taken the lead in this whole delicate matter from the beginning. Already in the first months of our friendship, at a time when I could not imagine my future as anything other than in the dusty upholsterer's workshop, standing at the carding machine, Adolf, although he was almost a year younger than I, had convincingly made it clear to me that I must become a musician. After he had, as my mother said at the time, "put this flea in my ear," he did not let up. He encouraged me when I despaired, he strengthened my self-confidence when I trusted myself too little, he praised, he criticized, he sometimes became coarse and vehement and scolded me furiously, yet he never lost sight of the goal he had set for me, and if there had ever been a row between the two of us, so that

I believed that everything would now be at an end, we renewed our friendship in radiant enthusiasm after a concert or a performance in which I had participated. By God, no one on this earth, not even my mother, who loved me so dearly and knew me best, was able to translate my secret wishes into reality as directly as my friend, although he himself had had no systematic musical instruction.

In the winter of 1907, when the work in the workshop slackened and I had more time for myself again, I received instruction in harmony, along with a second student, from the conductor of the Linz Landestheater. It was a study as intensive as it was successful, which filled me with bright enthusiasm. Unfortunately, however, I could not receive instruction in Linz in the other necessary music-theoretical subjects, such as counterpoint, theory of form, instrumentation, and music history. There was also no seminar for exercises in orchestral conducting and composition theory, let alone any encouragement for free composition. This training could only be offered to me by the Conservatory in Vienna. Furthermore, I had the opportunity there to experience truly first-class and perfect performances of operas and concerts. My decision to go to Vienna was firm, but I did not have the necessary toughness, like my friend, to push this decision through against all obstacles that arose. But Adolf had already prepared the way. Without me actually knowing how he had done it, he had succeeded in convincing my mother of my musical vocation. But what mother would not like to hear it when her only son is prophesied a great career as a conductor and director, especially since music meant half of life to my mother just as it did to me? So she was soon in league with us. Since my lungs were not up to the constant dust of the workshop, there was also the justified concern for my health. My mother, who had taken Adolf into her heart much like Mrs. Klara had once taken me, was thus won over. So everything else depended only on the consent of my father. Not that he would have openly opposed my wish! My father was in everything the opposite of Adolf's father, as I knew him from my friend's descriptions. Quiet and seemingly uninvolved, he let everything happen around him. His entire concern was for the business, which he had created from nothing, successfully brought through difficult crises, and had now expanded into a respected, well-flourishing enterprise. He regarded my musical inclinations as an idle hobby. He could not possibly imagine how one could build a secure existence on what was, after all, more or less useless fiddling and tinkling.

could. It remained incomprehensible to him until the very end how I, who after all knew what hardship and poverty were, could renounce this reliable basis of existence in favor of a vague future. The "pigeons on the roof" and the "sparrows in the hand"—how often I have heard this example. How often the bitter word: "What have I actually toiled for?" I worked more diligently than ever in the workshop, for I did not want it said of me that I would neglect my learned profession for the sake of my music studies. My father took my zeal as a sign that I wanted to stay in the trade and one day take over the business. My mother knew how much my father was attached to his enterprise. So she preferred to remain silent so as not to cause him any worry. Thus, at the same time that my musical further education would have absolutely required a move to the conservatory in Vienna, everything in the domestic sphere stood at a standstill. I worked with fiery zeal in the workshop and remained silent. My mother remained silent. My father thought I had finally given up my plan and remained silent as well.

Then Adolf came to visit our house again. At first glance, he recognized how the situation stood and intervened immediately. First, he brought me back "into shape." During his stay in Vienna, he had inquired about all the details of music studies, now gave me precise information about them, and in between described to me, truly enticingly, what he had experienced in the musical field in the opera and concert hall. These vivid descriptions also gripped my mother, and so everything then pressed for a decision. But there was no other choice than for Adolf himself to try to convince my father.

A difficult undertaking! What use was the most brilliant eloquence if the old master upholsterer thought nothing of artistic things? He liked Adolf well enough so far. But in his eyes, he was, after all, only a young man who had failed in school and who thought himself too good to learn a trade.

My father had tolerated our friendship, but in reality, he would have wished for a more capable companion for me. The position for Adolf was therefore decidedly poor. That he nevertheless managed to win my father over to our plan in a relatively short time is astonishing. I could have understood it if the decision had been made in a violent clash of opinions; for then Adolf would have been in his element and could have played the trumps he had up his sleeve. But it was not like that. I cannot remember a debate in the actual sense at all. Adolf spoke in a tone as if the whole thing were not so important, and above all, he left my father in the belief that only he, my father alone, could make the decision. He found also resigned himself to the fact that my father gave only half-hearted consent and proposed an interim solution: since the current school year at the conservatory had already begun in the autumn, I should initially go to Vienna only on a trial basis and look around a bit there. If the training opportunities met my expectations, I could still decide then; in the opposite case, however, I would return home and enter the paternal business. Adolf, who hated compromises and was accustomed to going all out in everything, was surprisingly satisfied with this. I was blissful as never before in my life, for now I had pushed through my plan without upsetting my father, and my mother shared in my joy.

At the beginning of February, Adolf went back to Vienna. His address remained the same, he explained to me upon departure, for he had continued to pay the rent to Mrs. Zakreys. I was to write to him in good time when I would arrive in Vienna. I helped him bring his luggage to the station. There were, if I am not mistaken, four suitcases, each quite heavy. I asked him what he was carrying in these suitcases. He replied: "All my belongings." But they were almost entirely books.

On the platform, Adolf spoke of Stefanie once more. Unfortunately, he said, he had found no opportunity to speak to her, for he had never encountered her without company. What he had to say to Stefanie, however, was intended for her alone. "Perhaps I will write to her," he declared in conclusion. But I took this thought, which Adolf expressed then for the first time, only as an expression of his embarrassment or at best as cheap consolation. My friend boarded and reached out his hand to me from the lowered window. The train started moving. "Come soon, Gustl!" Adolf called out again.

At home, my good mother was already preparing linens and clothes for the journey to the great, unknown Vienna. Finally, my father also wanted to contribute something. He built a large crate for me and had a locksmith fit it with strong iron bands. I packed my piano scores and sheet music into it; my mother filled the remaining space with clothes and shoes.

In the meantime, a card arrived from Adolf, dated February 18, 1908. It shows a view of the arms collection of the Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum, armored knights on foot and on horseback:

"Dear Friend!" — This salutation was a sign of how much our relationship had deepened since the death of his mother. The text appearing below the picture read:

"Dear Friend! Am already waiting longingly for news of your come. Write soon and definitely, so that I can make everything ready for the solemn reception. All of Vienna is already waiting. So come soon. I will, of course, pick you up.”

On the address side of the card it says:
“Now a bit of nice weather is starting here. Hopefully it will change by then. So, as I said, first you stay with me. We will both see then. One can really get a piano here in the so-called ‘Dorotheum’ for as little as 50—60 fl. So, many greetings to you as well as your worthy parents from your friend Adolf Hitler”

Added to this is the postscript: “Please, again, come soon!”

As always, Adolf had addressed the card to “Gustav” Kubizek, whereby he wrote Gustav once with a “v”, then again with “ph”, because he absolutely could not stand my first name August and always called me only “Gustl”, which is why Gustav was closer to him than August.

He probably would have liked best to see me change my first name in all due form. Delightfully, he even addressed the congratulatory card, which he later sent to me for my name day, Augustin on August 28th, to “Gustav”. Under the name stands the abbreviation “stud.”; I remember that he liked to refer to me as “stud. mus.”

In contrast to the earlier cards from him, this one is kept much more cordially. Typical of Adolf's mental state is the humor that speaks from the card. “All of Vienna is waiting for you!” he explains to me, and he wants to prepare a “solemn reception” for me. A sign of how he felt relieved and liberated in Vienna after the dark, universally distressed days he spent in Linz after the death of his mother, however uncertain the external circumstances remained there. Nevertheless, the feeling of loneliness must have oppressed him greatly. The “longingly” of the first sentence is certainly meant seriously. That he repeats the “Come soon” once more, even in the form “Please, again, come soon!”, proves how much he waited for my coming. The information about a piano to be acquired cheaply was also intended to hasten my arrival. Perhaps he had a secret worry whether my indecisive father might not change my mind at the last moment.

Moreover, having returned to Vienna, he held firm to his resolved decision to train one way or another as a master builder. He says about it:
“When I now moved to Vienna for the third time after the death of my mother, and this time for many years, calm and determination had returned to me with the time that had passed in the interval. The former defiance had come back, and my goal was finally in sight. I wanted to become a master builder...” —

The day of my departure, February 22, 1907, had arrived. In the morning, I went with my mother to the Carmelite Church one last time. I felt how difficult the farewell was for my dear mother, even though she herself had held most firmly to the decision we had made. Yet I also still remember a typical remark my father made that day when he saw my mother crying: "I don't understand you, Mother," he said, "why you are so dejected. We didn't order Gustl to leave his parental home. He wants to do it himself."

My mother channeled her grief over the parting into concern for my physical well-being. She gave me a nice piece of pork loin to take along, and roast drippings, intended to serve as a spread for bread, were kept in a separate container. A pan of *Buchteln* was baked, and a large piece of Emmental cheese was packed away. I was told to be especially careful with the jar of jam as well as the bottle of coffee. My brown canvas suitcase was stuffed full of food, despite the two expansion pleats on the sides.

And so, well-provided for in every respect, I went to the station after our last lunch together. My parents accompanied me. My father shook my hand and said: "Always remain a decent person!" My mother, however, kissed me with tearful eyes and, as the train pulled away, made the sign of the cross over me. For a long time afterward, I could still feel her delicate fingers as they traced the cross upon my forehead.

STUMPERGASSE 29

The first impression I received upon my arrival in Vienna was one of agitated, noisy chaos. There I stood with my heavy suitcase in hand, so dazed that at first I did not even know which way to turn. All these people and this racket! This was going to be something. I would have preferred to turn right back around *stante pede* and go home. But the people pushed me along, scolding and swearing, and squeezed me through the barrier, which was monitored by railway employees and police officers. Suddenly I was standing in the transit hall, looking around for my friend. This first greeting on Viennese soil has remained unforgettable to me. While I stood there helplessly, still quite dizzy from all the shouting and turmoil—recognizable from afar as someone coming in from the country, "Linz = Province," as the Viennese mockingly rhymed—Adolf displayed a decidedly adept, big-city demeanor. In his solid dark winter coat, dark hat, and walking stick with an ivory handle, he looked almost distinguished. He was obviously delighted at my arrival, greeted me warmly, and, according to the custom of the time, gave me a light kiss on the cheek.

The first problem that confronted me was the transport of my suitcase, which, thanks to my mother's care, was of a very considerable weight. I was already looking around for a porter, but Adolf had already grabbed one of the two carrying straps and I the other. We crossed Mariahilfer Straße—people everywhere again, a frightening back-and-forth and a noise so terrible that one could not understand one's own words, but impressive were the electric arc lamps that illuminated the station square as bright as day! I still remember how happy I was when Adolf turned into a side street shortly thereafter, Stumpergasse. Here it was quiet and dark. In front of a fairly newly built house on the right side, it was number 29, Adolf stopped. As far as I could see, it was a very beautiful house, quite stately and noble, perhaps a bit too noble for young people of our kind, I thought. But Adolf strode through the hallway and crossed a narrow courtyard. The rear building looked significantly more modest. We went up a dark staircase to the second floor.

Several doors led to the hallway. Number 17 was the right one. Adolf unlocked it. A foul smell of kerosene struck me, which for me has since been inseparably linked in memory with this apartment. We found ourselves apparently in a kitchen. The landlady was not present. Adolf opened a second door. In the small room he occupied, a meager kerosene lamp was burning. I looked around. The first thing I noticed were drawings lying everywhere, on the table, on the bed. Everything looked bleak and poor. Adolf cleared the table, spread newspaper over it, and brought a bottle of milk from the window. Beside it, he placed homemade bread and cold cuts. But I still see his pale, serious face before me as I push these things aside and open the suitcase before his eyes. Cold roast pork, *Buchteln*, and other delicacies. He simply said: "Well, if one still has a mother!" Then we ate like kings. It tasted so wonderfully of "home." Only now, after all the hustle and bustle, was I somewhat myself again.

After a short pause, the expected question about Stefanie came. When I had to confess to him that I had not been out for a stroll for a long time, Adolf thought that I should have gone for his sake. Before I could answer, there was a knock. A small, shriveled old woman, somewhat odd in appearance, slipped through the door. Adolf stood up and introduced me formally: "My friend Gustav Kubizek, a music student from Linz." — "Very pleased, very pleased," the old woman repeated several times and then likewise gave her name: Maria Zakreys. From the singing intonation and the peculiar foreign accent, I recognized immediately that Frau Zakreys was not a Viennese. More accurately, a Viennese perhaps, maybe even a very typical one, only her cradle had not stood in Hernals or Lerchenfeld, but in Stanislau or Neutitschein. I did not ask about it, nor did I ever find out; in the end, it remained inconsequential. In any case, Frau Zakreys was for Adolf and me the only human being in this city of millions with whom we maintained contact. I remember that Adolf, as exhausted as I was, led me through the city that very first evening. How could a person come to Vienna and go to sleep without having seen the Court Opera? So I was dragged to the Opera. The performance was not yet over. I admired the entrance hall, the magnificent staircase, the marble balustrade, the velour carpets, the gilded stucco work on the ceiling. Looking back at the poor apartment in Stumpergasse, it now seemed to me as if I had been transported to another planet, so overwhelming was this impression. But now I also wanted to see St. Stephen's Tower. We walked into Kärntner Straße. But the night mist was so thick that the tower disappeared within it. I saw only the massive, dark bulk of the nave, as it grew—vast, almost eerie, not at all like something built by human hands—into the gray monotony of the fog. Adolf led me, in order to show me something else special, to the Church of Maria am Gestade, which, compared to the weight of St. Stephen's Cathedral, seemed to me like a delicate Gothic chapel.

When we got home, we each had to pay a "Sperrsechserl" to the grumpy caretaker, whom we had rung out of his sleep, for opening the front door. Frau Zakreys had prepared a primitive bed for me on the floor of the small cabinet. Although midnight had long since passed, Adolf was still talking at me vehemently. But I no longer heard him. It was simply too much for me. The emotional farewell at home, the moved face of my mother, the journey, the arrival, the noise, the bustle, the Vienna in the rear building of Stumpergasse, the Vienna of the Court Opera—exhausted, I fell asleep.

Naturally, I could not stay at Frau Zakreys'. It was also impossible to set up a grand piano in the small cabinet. So the next morning, after Adolf had finally gotten up, we set out to search for a room. Since I wanted to live as close as possible to my friend, we scoured the nearby alleys and streets of the sixth and seventh districts. Once again, I could see this so-alluring Vienna from its "reverse side." Dark backyards, narrow, lightless tenements and stairs, stairs again and again. Adolf paid ten crowns at Frau Zakreys', and I wanted to pay the same for a cabinet. But what we were shown was mostly so small and meager that it was impossible to set up a grand piano, and when we finally found a cabinet that would have been large enough, we were told they wanted nothing to do with a tenant who played the piano. I was depressed and dejected. Homesickness plagued me painfully. What a large city this Vienna was! Nothing but strange, indifferent people; wasn't it terrible to live here? So I walked down Zollergasse beside Adolf, very despondent and subdued. There, on a house, we saw another sign: "Room for Rent." When we rang the bell at the door, a very neatly dressed parlor maid opened it and led us into a very elegantly furnished room, in which stood a magnificent double bed. "The gracious lady will be here shortly," the girl explained to us, curtsied, and disappeared. We both realized immediately that it was too distinguished for us here. But then the "gracious lady" already appeared in the doorway, a perfect lady, no longer quite young, but very elegant. She wore a silk dressing gown; her slippers, very dainty little mules, were trimmed with fur. Smiling, she greeted us, looked at Adolf, then at me, and offered us a seat. My friend asked which room was for rent here.

"This one here!" the lady said, pointing to the two beds. Adolf shook his head. "Then one bed would have to go, because my friend must be able to set up a grand piano," he said curtly. The lady was visibly taken aback that it was not Adolf, but I who wished to rent a room, and asked if he, Adolf, already had a room. When he affirmed this, she suggested to him that I should move into his cabinet along with the piano I needed, and rent this room instead. While she was explaining this to Adolf in very animated words, a movement that was too hasty caused the cord holding her dressing gown together to come loose. "Oh, pardon me, gentlemen!" the lady cried immediately, clutching the robe back together. But the moment had been enough to show us that she was wearing nothing more than a small pair of panties under her silk robe. Adolf turned beet red, stood up, grabbed me by the arm, and said: "Come, Gustl!" I no longer remember how we got out of the apartment. I only remember the one word that Adolf spat out furiously when we were finally on the street: "Such a Potiphar!" But apparently, such experiences also belonged to Vienna. Once again, I stood before that incomprehensible and yet so typical contradiction of the Vienna of that time: four hours of nothing but cold, detached rejection, and then unexpectedly, this all-too-clear invitation!

Adolf might have felt how difficult it was for me to find my way in this confusing metropolis, for on the way home he made the suggestion that we should take a room together. He wanted to speak with Frau Zakreys. Perhaps a solution could be found in her own apartment.

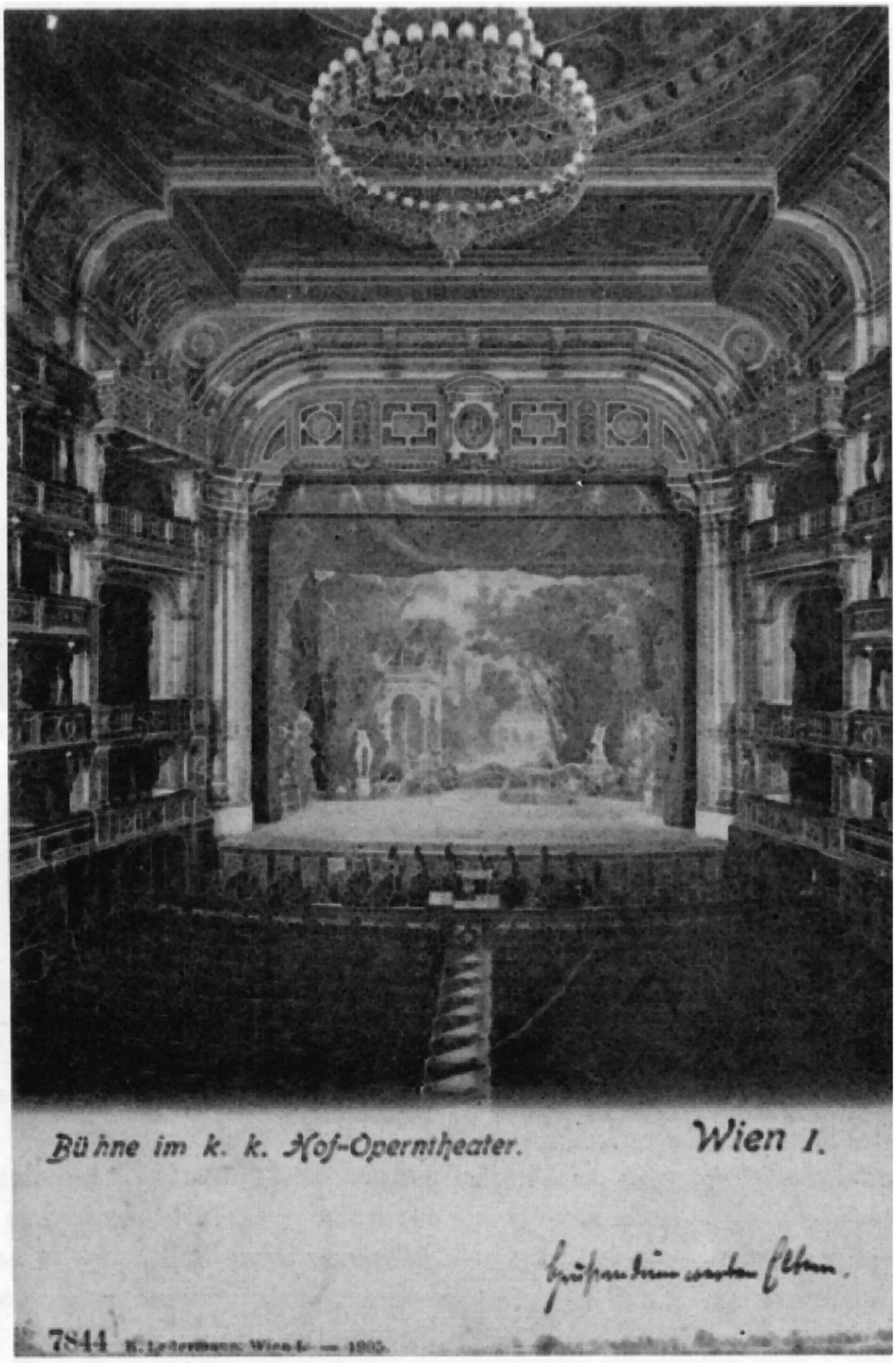
In fact, he succeeded in persuading Frau Zakreys to move into his cabinet and to leave us the somewhat more spacious room that she had occupied until then. We agreed on a rent of twenty crowns for it. She had no objection to my piano playing. A brilliant solution, then, which satisfied me greatly.

The next morning — Adolf was still sleeping — I went to the conservatory to enroll. I presented the certificates from the Linz Music Society and was immediately examined. First, a general hearing test took place, then I had to sight-sing, and finally, I was given a written exam in harmony. It all went very smoothly. Only in music history — I had studied this subject only privately — did the assigned examination topic, "The Age of Baroque Opera," cause me some difficulties. The Bûlow-Cramer etudes on the piano concluded the entrance examination. I was called into the secretariat. Director Kaiser — for me, he really was the Emperor — congratulated me on my success and briefed me on the subjects to be taken. He advised me, as to enroll as an extraordinary student at the university and to attend lectures on music history there. Furthermore, he introduced me to the conductor Gustav Gutheil, with whom I was to learn score reading, score playing, and carry out practical exercises in conducting. Additionally, I was accepted into the institute orchestra as a violist.

Everything was well-organized, and so, despite the initial confusion, I soon found myself on solid ground. As so often in my existence, I found comfort and help in music; even more, it now became the very essence of my life. I had finally escaped the dusty upholsterer's workshop and lived entirely for my art.

In the neighboring Liniengasse, I discovered a piano salon whose owner was named Feigl. There I looked at the rental pianos. Understandably, they were not particularly good instruments. However, I eventually found a quite passable grand piano, which I rented for a monthly fee of ten crowns. When Adolf, whose daily schedule I had not yet quite figured out, returned in the evening, he was astonished to see the grand piano. For the not very large room, an upright piano would have been more practical. But how was I to become a conductor without a grand piano! Of course, the matter was not as simple as I had thought. Adolf immediately intervened to test the most practical arrangement. To have enough light, the keyboard had to stand near the window. He realized that. After long experimentation, the room's inventory—two beds, a nightstand, a wardrobe, a washstand, a table, two chairs—was brought into the most advantageous position. Nevertheless, the instrument extended across the entire right window. The table had to be moved into the left window niche. The passage between the beds and the grand piano, as well as between the beds and the table, was barely more than thirty centimeters wide. For Adolf, however, pacing up and down was just as important as playing the piano was for me. First trial! From the door to the curve of the grand piano—three steps! That was enough, for three steps forward and three back made six, even if Adolf had to turn so often during this continuous promenade that it was hardly a pacing up and down anymore, but almost a movement around his own axis.

From our dwelling, we could only see the bare, sooty back wall of the front building of the rest of the world. Only if one stepped very close to the free window and looked steeply upwards could a narrow strip of the firmament be discovered, yet even this modest piece of sky was mostly shrouded in smoke, dust, or fog. On particularly favorable days, even the sun broke through. Of course, it hardly shone into the rear building and certainly not into our room. But on the front side of the front building, there was then for a few hours a spot brightly lit by the sun...

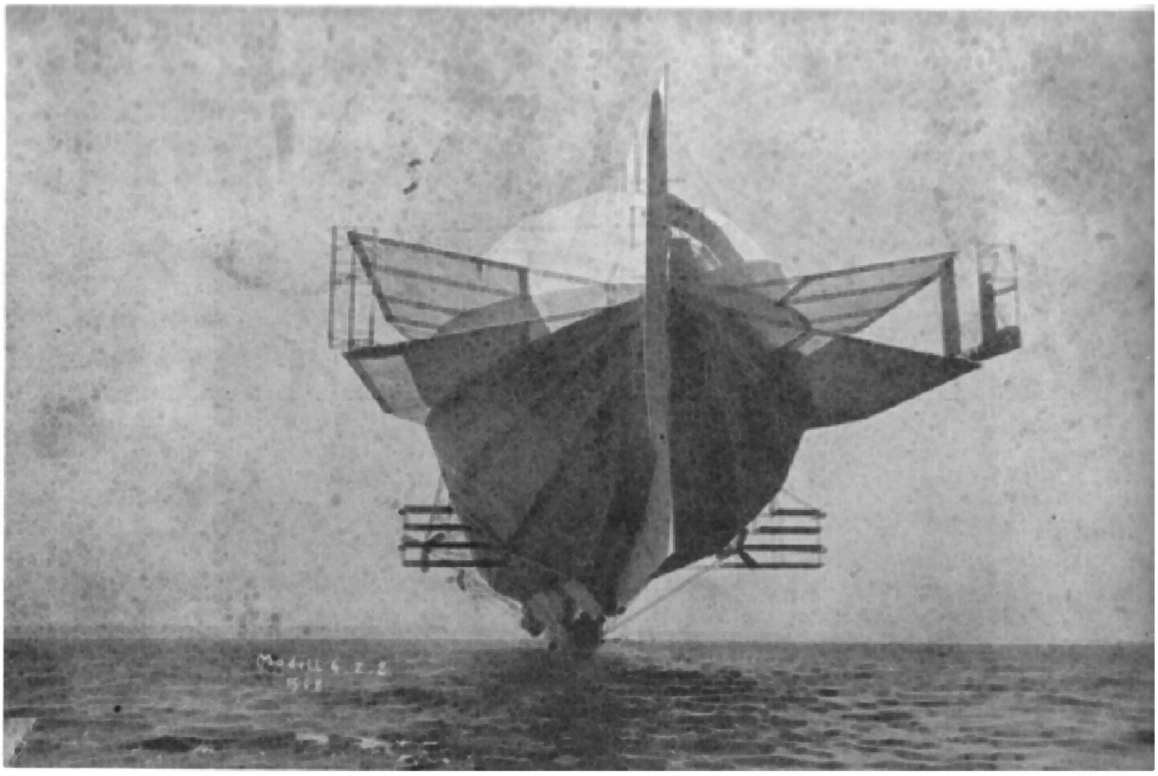

Bühne im k. k. Hof-Operntheater.
Wien I.
7844 K. Ledermann, Wien I. — 1905.

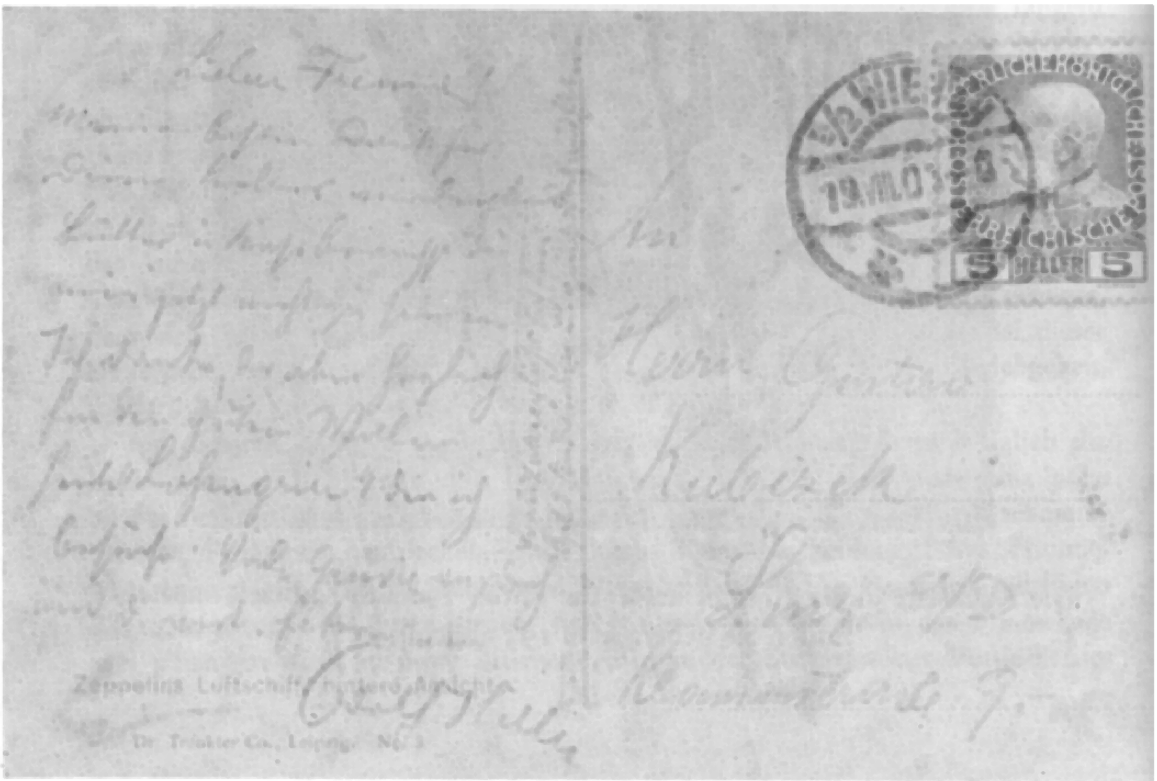
Stage in the I. & R. Court Opera House. *Vienna I.*

[Handwritten signature/note in German script]

7844 K. Ledermann, Wien I. — 1905.

The back of this postcard, which Hitler sent to Kubizek in 1906, is pictured next to page 219.





Lieber Freund!
Meinen besten Dank für
Deine beiden wunderschönen
Bilder in Kupferdruck. [illegible]
[illegible]
Ich danke Dir aber herzlich
für den [illegible]
[illegible] Lohengrin, den ich
besuche. Viele Grüße an Dich
und Deine [illegible]
Adolf Hitler

Zeppelins Luftschiff, hintere Ansicht

Dr. Trenkler Co., Leipzig. No. 1

WIEN
19.VIII.08

KAISERLICH KÖNIGLICHE ÖSTERREICHISCHE POST
5 HELLER 5

An
Herrn Gustav
Kubizek
in
Linz a/D
Klammstraße 7

This card already dates from the time when Adolf Hitler lived in Vienna.

...sun-drenched strip to be seen, which had to replace the sunshine for us, which we missed so much.

I told Adolf that I had passed the entrance examination at the Conservatory well and was happy that I was now, like him, in a steady course of study. Adolf merely said: "I didn't even know that I had such a clever friend." That did not sound very flattering. But I had already grown accustomed to such remarks from him. He was apparently having very critical days now, was easily irritable, and waved me off brusquely whenever I began to speak of my studies. He eventually came to terms with my grand piano quite well. He thought he could brush up on his knowledge there too. I offered to teach him. But there I got it completely wrong again. He growled at me resentfully: "Keep your etude and scale junk to yourself! I'll get ahead on my own." But then he calmed down again and said, in a conciliatory mood: "Why should I become a musician, Gustl! I have you!" —

Our living conditions were extremely modest. I couldn't make any great leaps with the monthly allowance my father sent me, either. At the beginning of every month, Adolf regularly received a certain amount transferred from his guardian. How high this sum was, I do not know; perhaps it was only the orphan's pension, i.e., 25 Kronen, of which he immediately had to pay ten Kronen to Frau Zakreys; perhaps it was a bit more, if the guardian also drew from the parental inheritance and allocated it accordingly. Whether relatives supported Adolf, perhaps the hunchbacked Aunt Johanna, I do not know. I only know that Adolf was already going very hungry back then, although he did not like to admit it to me. What did Adolf's daily meals normally look like? A bottle of milk, an Anker bread, some butter. At lunchtime, he often bought a piece of poppy seed or nut strudel to go with it. He made do with that. Every fortnight a food parcel arrived from my mother; then it was a feast day in our quarters. But in money matters, Adolf was very precise. I never knew how much or, better said, how little he possessed. He was surely secretly ashamed. Only every now and then did anger burst out of him. Then he would rage furiously: "Is this not a dog's life we are leading?" And yet he was happy and satisfied whenever we went to the opera again, heard a concert, or an interesting book occupied him.

For a long time, I could not find out where he ate lunch. My questions about it were rebuffed curtly. That was not a topic one discussed. Since I sometimes had a bit more time in the afternoons, I would come home shortly after my midday meal. But I never encountered Adolf in the apartment at that time. Perhaps he sat in the soup kitchen over in Liniengasse, where I sometimes ate lunch. No, he was not there.

I went to the "Auge Gottes" (Eye of God). He was not to be found there either. When I asked him in the evening why he never came to the public kitchen, he gave me a lecture on the wretched establishment of these soup kitchens, in which the separation of social classes was demonstrated with the help of the cabbage bowl. As a university attendee, I had the opportunity to eat in the cafeteria — it was still the old cafeteria; at that time, the German cafeteria established by the German School Association did not yet exist! I could also obtain cheap meal tickets for Adolf. He finally went there with me. I knew how much he liked pastries, and I took a few extra "Buchtel" tickets to go with the roast. I thought it must taste wonderful to him, for one could read on his face how hungry he was. But he defiantly choked down the morsels. "I don't understand how you can enjoy your food next to these people!" he hissed at me angrily. Naturally, members of all nations of the Monarchy frequented the cafeteria, including many Jewish students. That was reason enough for him not to go there anymore. More precisely: for all the consistency he was capable of, hunger occasionally remained the victor. Then he would squeeze into a corner next to me in the cafeteria, turn his back on the rest of the public, and ravenously devour the nut strudel, which he loved above all else. In my political nonchalance, I witnessed this oscillation between anti-Semitism and an appetite for nut strudel with secret amusement often enough.

For days, Adolf could live only on milk, bread, and a little butter. I was certainly not spoiled, but on this point, I could not follow him. We made no acquaintances. Adolf would never have endured me having time for others besides him. More than ever, he regarded our friendship as a matter that excluded every other relationship. By chance, I received a very clear lesson from him regarding this.

Theory of harmony was my particular hobbyhorse. I had already excelled in this subject in Linz. I kept up with the lessons with ease. Then Professor Boschetti had me called to the office and asked me if I would be willing to give private tutoring. Then I was introduced to my future students: the two daughters of a brewery owner in Kolomea, a Transylvanian estate owner's daughter from Radautz, as well as the daughter of a wholesale merchant in Spalato. The stark contrast between the elegant boarding houses where the young ladies lived and our dark, constantly kerosene-smelling shack depressed me greatly. Usually, after the lesson was given, I received a snack so substantial that it could replace dinner for me. When the daughter of a cloth manufacturer from Jägerndorf in Silesia and the daughter of a court president in Agram were added, sitting with my half...

dozen schoolgirls, girls from all parts of the extensive Danube Monarchy, together. And then the unforeseen happened. One of them, the Silesian girl, could not find her way through a written assignment and ran to me in Stumpergasse to ask for information. When our good old landlady saw the pretty young girl, she raised her eyebrows in astonishment. Well, that was still acceptable. I was really only concerned with the musical example that she had not understood. I explained the matter to her. She quickly wrote down the example. Then Adolf entered the room. I introduced him to my student: "My friend from Linz, Adolf Hitler!" Adolf remained silent. But as soon as the girl was outside, he, who had been hostile toward women and girls since the failed experience with Stefanie, fell upon me in a rage. He asked me angrily whether our quarters, already cluttered by the grand piano—that monster—were now also to become a rendezvous for this musical "female brood." I had trouble convincing him that the poor girl was by no means suffering from lovesickness, but only from exam nerves. The result was a detailed lecture on the futility of female studies. Blow after blow, the words pelted down on me, as if I were the cloth manufacturer or brewery owner who had sent his daughters to the conservatory. Adolf lost himself further and further in a critique of social and societal conditions. I crouched silently on the piano stool while he angrily paced three steps forward, three steps back, discharging his indignation in the sharpest possible terms right by the door or at the piano.

In general, during this first period in Vienna, I had the impression that Adolf had completely lost his balance. The slightest occasion could lead to furious outbursts of anger. There were days when I could do nothing right for him and he thoroughly spoiled every moment of our being together. But I had known Adolf for more than three years now. I had witnessed his severe crises after the failure at school and the death of his mother. I did not know, to be sure, what these psychological depressions were attributable to. But eventually, this condition would surely improve, I thought.

He was at odds with the whole world. Wherever he looked, he saw only injustice, hatred, enmity. Nothing could withstand his critical judgment; he accepted nothing. Only music alone was able to cheer him up somewhat, for instance, when we went to the church music performances in the Hofburg Chapel on Sundays. Here one could hear soloists from the Vienna Court Opera and the Vienna Boys' Choir free of charge. Adolf loved this famous boys' choir especially, and he confessed to me again and again how much he owed to that musical education which he himself had received at the Lambach Abbey. On the other hand, for him it was precisely...

at that time, the memory of his carefree, lighthearted childhood was particularly painful.

At the same time, he was restlessly busy. I had no real idea of what there was for a student of the Academy of Fine Arts to do. In any case, this course of study must have been very multifaceted, for at one time Adolf would sit for hours over books, then again he would write until deep into the night, and at another time the grand piano, the table, his bed and mine, even the floor was covered with drawings. Adolf looked down intently at his work, stalking on tiptoe between the drawing sheets, improving here, correcting there, and talking softly to himself, underlining the hastily spoken words with vigorous gestures. Woe betide me if I disturbed him during these contemplations. I had great respect for this difficult and involved study and was satisfied with what I saw. But when I did eventually open the piano impatiently, he would hastily push the sheets together, put them away in the chest, tuck a book under his arm and run off with it to Schönbrunn. He had discovered a quiet bench there, in the midst of the greenery, where no one disturbed him. Whatever could be carried out of his studies in the open air was tackled on this lonely bench. I too loved this quiet spot, where one could forget being in the middle of a city of millions. I visited this familiar bench in the most remote part of the park several times in later years when I came to Schönbrunn.

But apparently, a student of architecture could work much more in the open and more independently than a conservatory student. When he had once again written until deep into the night — the small, ugly, sooty kerosene lamp had almost burned down, I could not sleep — I went up to him and asked him what was to become of this work. Instead of an answer, he handed me a few pages covered in writing with hasty strokes. Astonished, I read: Holy mountain in the background, in front of it the mighty sacrificial stone, overshadowed by giant oaks. Two powerful warriors hold the black bull, which is to be sacrificed, firmly by the horns and press the heavy head of the sacrificial bull against the hollow of the stone. Behind them stands, drawn up to his full height, the priest in light-colored robes. He holds the slaughtering sword in his fists, with which he will kill the bull. All around, solemn, bearded men stare, leaning on their shields, their spears held upright, tense at the solemn scene.

I could discover no connection between this strange depiction and a study of architecture. So I asked what that was supposed to be.

"A play," Adolf replied.

Then he described the plot to me in gripping words. Unfortunately, I have...

had long since forgotten them. I only remember that the play was supposed to be set in the Bavarian foothills of the Alps, specifically during the time of Christianization. The men who lived around the Holy Mountain were not willing to be converted to the new faith. On the contrary! They had sworn to strike down the Christian messengers. From this developed the dramatic conflict of this play.

I was already about to ask Adolf whether his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts left him so much free time that he could write such dramas on the side. But I knew how sensitive Adolf was in everything that touched upon his chosen profession. I could empathize with him, for he had fought hard enough for his studies. That made him particularly sensitive on this point, I thought. But nevertheless, something about it didn't seem quite right.

His state of mind caused me more concern from day to day. Never before had I discovered this self-tormenting trait in him. On the contrary! As far as his self-confidence was concerned, in my experience he possessed rather too much of it than too little. But that now seemed to be turning into the opposite. He dug himself deeper and deeper into his self-reproaches. Yet it required only a simple switch—as one turns on the light with a light hand and everything dark suddenly becomes radiantly bright—and the accusation directed against himself became an accusation against the times, against the whole world. In tumbling tirades of hate, he hurled his anger at the present, alone and lonely, against the whole of humanity, which did not understand him, which did not acknowledge him, by which he felt persecuted and betrayed. I can still see him before me, how in boundless excitement he paced the narrow room with large, sweeping strides, moved to his very core. I sat, my fingers silent on the keyboard, at the grand piano and listened to him, churned up by his chants of hate and yet in my innermost being full of worry for him, for no one heard what he shouted at the bare walls except me and perhaps Frau Zakreys, who was busy out in the kitchen and was perhaps worried whether this rabid young man would even be able to pay his rent in the future. But those against whom these glowing words were directed, all those whom it concerned, did not hear him. So why all the effort? Suddenly, however, in the middle of this hate-filled speech, with which he challenged an entire epoch, a word fell that showed me the dark abyss on the edge of which he moved in his thoughts:

"I will give up Stefanie." This was the most terrible word that could cross his lips, for Stefanie was the only person on God's earth who stood outside of these wicked people, a being who, transfigured by radiant love, gave meaning and substance to his tortured existence.

had given. His father dead, his mother dead, his only sister still a child — what was left to him then? He had no family, no home. Only his love, only Stefanie, had remained faithfully by his side in the midst of the heavy crises and catastrophes — admittedly, only in his imagination. But this imagination had hitherto been strong enough to help him over his own fate. In the emotional upheaval he experienced during these weeks, however, this stubbornly believed notion had apparently also collapsed.

"I thought you wanted to write to her?" I interjected, to help him along with my suggestion.

With a domineering gesture he dismissed my words (only forty years later did I learn that he had actually written to Stefanie at that time), then words fell such as I had never heard from him before:

"Pointless to wait for Stefanie. Surely 'Madam Mother' already has the man Stefanie must marry ready. Love? No one asks about that. A good match, at least in the eyes of 'Madam Mother'."

There followed a furious argument about "Madam Mother," and about the members of those noble circles in general, who, through cleverly arranged marriages, mutually guarantee the unearned advantages they enjoy within human society.

I gave up the attempt to practice at the piano any longer and went to bed. Adolf threw himself over his books. I still remember how affected I was then. If Adolf no longer held onto Stefanie, what was to become of him?

Conflicting feelings dominated me. On the one hand, I was glad that the hopeless love for Stefanie was finally fading and relieving him emotionally; on the other hand, I knew that Stefanie was his only ideal, which gave him impetus and set a goal for his creative work.

The next day a nasty row broke out between the two of us. The occasion was trivial. I had to practice on the grand piano; Adolf wanted to read. Outside it was raining. So he could not run over to Schönbrunn.

"This eternal tinkling!" he flared up at me. "One is never safe from it."

"Quite simple," I replied, stood up, pulled my schedule out of the music portfolio, and pinned it with thumbtacks to the wall of the wardrobe. From it, Adolf could see exactly when I was away, when not, and how my practice hours were set. "And now hang your schedule underneath it," I added. Schedule? He didn't need to write down such a thing. He had his schedule in his head. That was enough for him, and it would have to be enough for me too. End of story.

I shrugged my shoulders doubtfully. His work was anything but orderly and systematic. He worked almost exclusively at night; in the morning he slept.

I had settled in very quickly and well at the conservatory; my knowledge was recognized, I was praised, even distinguished, as evidenced by the request to give tutoring lessons. This understandably made me proud, and certainly a bit conceited as well. Music, as the art least graspable by intellect and knowledge, also most easily allowed a deficient school education to be overlooked. So I headed, content and happy, with a chest swollen with courage, toward the conservatory every morning. But it was precisely this single-mindedness, this certainty of success, that prompted Adolf—without him speaking of it—to make bitter comparisons.

Thus, in view of the timetable pinned to the wardrobe wall, which must have seemed to him like an officially certified guarantee for my future, the explosion occurred.

“This Academy!” he screamed, “nothing but old, cramped, narrow-minded civil servants, insensitive bureaucrats, stupid creatures of officialdom! The whole Academy deserves to be blown into the air!” His face was deathly pale, his mouth very narrow, his lips almost white. But his eyes glowed. Eerie, those eyes! As if all the hatred he was capable of lay only in those smoldering eyes.

I wanted to interject that those men at the Academy, over whom he so summarily broke the staff in his excessive hatred, were after all his teachers and professors, from whom he could surely gain much. But he anticipated my words.

“They rejected me, threw me out, I am excluded...”

I was startled. So that was it. Adolf was not attending the Academy at all. Now I could explain many things about him that had bewildered me.

In my heartfelt sympathy for his fate, I asked him if he had told his mother that he had not been accepted at the Academy.

“What are you thinking?” he replied, “I couldn't possibly cause this grief to my dying mother.”

I understood that.

For a while, silence reigned between us. Perhaps Adolf was now thinking of his mother.

Then I tried to bring the conversation to a practical conclusion.

“And what now?” I asked him.

“What now? What now?” he repeated irritably, “are you starting now too: what now?”

He must have put this question to himself a hundred times or more, for otherwise he had spoken to no one about it.

"What now?" he mimicked my worried question, sat down at the table instead of answering, and built his books up all around him: "What now?"

Then he adjusted the lamp, took one of the books, opened it, and began to read.

I wanted to take the schedule down from the cupboard wall. He raised his head, saw it, and said calmly: "Just leave it."

THE IMPERIAL CITY

We were often able to see the old Emperor when he drove from Schönbrunn in his court carriage, wearing his uniform with the black officer's cap, through Mariahilfer Straße into the Hofburg. The Emperor usually sat alone in the open carriage. As his only companion, an orderly officer with a sword and bicorne hat rode along. When we encountered the Emperor, Adolf made no fuss about it, nor did he speak of it, for to him it was not about the person of the Emperor, but only about the state he represented: the k. u. k. Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Just as all memories of my stay in Vienna move in contrasts and remained particularly vivid in my memory for that very reason, so it was with the general political events in the imperial city during the restless year of 1908. Two contradictory events moved people at that time. On the one hand, the Emperor's sixtieth jubilee of his reign. In the storm year of 1848, the then eighteen-year-old Franz Josef had ascended the throne of the Habsburgs. For six decades he had now ruled as Emperor. The people credited him highly for the fact that there had been a long peace during these sixty years. Since 1866, that is for 42 years, there had been no war. The young generation to which we belonged no longer knew what a war was, and intoxicated themselves with the battles of foreign peoples, such as the Boer War, which fell during our boyhood years, and the Russo-Japanese War, which we heard about as youths. But of war itself, we had no clear conception. Adolf's father had never been a soldier. Only now and then did an old man still tell of Königgrätz and Custozza. Thus the people saw in the Emperor the guardian of peace, and everywhere preparations were being made to celebrate the ruler's jubilee festively. We experienced it ourselves, with what touching zeal everyone was at work everywhere. On the other hand, however, in connection with this 1908 jubilee, the annexation of Bosnia was pronounced, a question that heated all heads at the time. This significant external increase in the power of the Monarchy, however, revealed its internal weakness, for soon the signs were clearly pointing toward war. Almost then what actually happened six years later, in 1914, would have taken place. It was no coincidence that this war was triggered in Sarajevo. Between devotion to the old Emperor and concern about the looming war the people of Vienna wavered in those years, among whom we both lived as two unknown young people. At every turn, we became aware of a sharp social contrast. There was the broad mass of common people, who often did not have enough to eat and vegetated in miserable dwellings without light or sun. Given our lifestyle at the time, we considered ourselves fully among them. It was not necessary for us to study this social mass misery of the city. It came to us on its own. We only had to think of the damp, crumbling walls of our apartment, the bedbug-infested furniture, the foul smell of petroleum, to transport ourselves into the milieu in which hundreds of thousands lived in this city. But if we went into the city center with growling stomachs, we saw how in the magnificent aristocratic palaces, in front of which stood ostentatious liveried servants, or in the opulent hotels, the wealthy society of Vienna—old, often mixed nobility, industrial barons, large landowners, and magnates—celebrated their roaring festivities. Here poverty, destitution, hunger; there frivolous enjoyment of life, sensory delirium, lavish luxury.

Homesickness plagued me too much for me to have drawn political consequences from this ambivalent experience. But Adolf, completely homeless, excluded from the Academy, radically cut off from all possibilities of being able to change his miserable condition, experienced this time in the sense of a growing inner protest. The visible social injustices, from which he suffered almost physically, built up in him a demonic hatred against that unmerited wealth that confronted us so presumptuously and arrogantly everywhere. Only in wild rebellion could he still endure this "dog's life." Certainly, he himself was to blame for much of how everything had turned out for him. But he never realized that. He suffered even more from the lack of cleanliness than from hunger. Adolf was, after all, possessed of an almost pathological sensitivity toward everything physical. By all means, he kept himself clean, at least in terms of linens and clothing. Anyone who saw this always carefully dressed young man on the street would never have thought that he had to go hungry every day and lived in a hopelessly bedbug-infested rear building in the 6th district. His innermost protest against these social grievances came less from hunger than from the forced uncleanness of the environment in which he had to live. The old imperial city with its atmosphere of false splendor and mendacious pathos, with its internal decay that could hardly be concealed anymore, was the soil on which his social and political views were formed. What he later became, this dying imperial Vienna shaped out of him. Even if he later wrote: "Five years of misery and woe are contained for me in the name of this Phaeacian city," it gives this statement reflected only the negative side of his Vienna experience. The positive side for him was that, precisely through the constant opposition to the prevailing social disorder, a political worldview was formed within him, to which he later did not add much more.

Despite all his sympathy for the misery of the broad masses, he never sought direct contact with the inhabitants of the imperial city. The type of the Viennese was repugnant to him in his very soul. Even this soft, inherently very melodic way of speaking was something he could not stand. He even preferred the stumbling German of Mrs. Zakreys. Above all, however, he hated the compliance, the dull indifference of the Viennese, this eternal "muddling through," this reckless living from one day to the next. His own character was completely contrary to this trait of the Viennese. As far as my own memory goes, Adolf imposed the greatest restraint on himself because contact with people was simply physically repugnant to him. But within him it fermented; everything in him pushed toward radical and total solutions.

How he mocked the "wine-induced bliss" of the Viennese, how he despised this whole "Heurigen-daze!" We went to the Prater only once and only for the sake of interest. He did not understand the people who dawdled away their precious time with such trivial stuff. When the crowd broke out into roaring laughter in front of a show booth with some attraction, he only shook his head in indignation at so much stupidity and asked me angrily whether I could understand why these people were laughing. In his opinion, they were merely laughing at themselves. That, he could understand. Furthermore, the colorful mixture of Viennese, Czechs, Magyars, Slovaks, Romanians, Croats, Italians, and God knows what else, crowding through the Prater, disgusted him intensely. For him, the Prater was only a Viennese Babylon. A strange contradiction that always struck me about him: all his thinking, his musing and striving revolved around helping the little people, the simple, decent, but practically disenfranchised folk. He counted himself among them. This people of the poor and dispossessed was constantly present in his contemplations and reflections. In reality, however, he avoided every encounter with people. The colorful mass that rolled through the Prater was physically unbearable to him. As much as he felt for the little people, he could not keep them far enough away from himself.

On the other hand, the hubris and arrogance of the leading classes were also completely foreign to him. Yet he understood even less the weary resignation that spread during those years among the intellectually supporting people. From the realization that the downfall of the Habsburg state could no longer be halted, a kind of fatalism had developed precisely among the traditional pillars of the monarchy spread itself, accepting everything the times brought with a genuine Viennese "Nothing can be done about it." This painfully sweet, silently resigned tone also resonated among the poets of Vienna, such as Rilke, Hofmannsthal, Wildgans—names that hardly reached us then, but by no means because we would not have been open to the words of a poet, but for the sole reason that the mood from which these poets created was completely foreign to both of us. Certainly, we came from the outside; we stood closer to the open countryside, to nature, than the people of this city. Beyond that, however, there was a significant generational difference between the layer of these people fading away in world-weary serenity and those of our own age. While the desolate social conditions, from which there seemed to be no way out, provoked only dull apathy and complete inactivity in the older generation, they forced the younger generation into radical criticism and the most vehement opposition. In Adolf, too, everything pushed stormily toward a sharp stance and resistance. He knew no resignation at all. Whoever resigned, in his view, lost the right to live. But he differed from the younger generation, which appeared very arrogantly and turbulently in Vienna at that time, in that he went his own way entirely and therefore could not come to terms with any of the then-prevailing political parties. Although a feeling was alive in him as if he were responsible for everything that happened, he remained in his essence an individual, a loner, one who stood on his own and wanted to find his goal alone.

One thing still requires mention here: Adolf's visits to Meidling, a decidedly working-class district. Even if he did not explain to me exactly what he was looking for there, I knew that he wanted to get to know the housing and living conditions of working-class families from his own observation. He was not concerned with an individual fate; he wanted to get to know the path of the social class. He therefore made no acquaintances in Meidling, but tried to establish an impersonal cross-section.

As much as he avoided close connection with people, Vienna as a city had grown close to his heart. He loved Vienna, but not the Viennese—that is how I would characterize his attitude. He would never have wanted to do without this city, but would have gladly dispensed with the people. No wonder that he appeared as a loner and an eccentric to the few who came into contact with him in Vienna in later years, and that they took his chosen language, his emphasized form, his noble demeanor, which stood in contrast to his obvious poverty, for arrogance or showing off. In fact, the young Hitler never found friends among the people of this city.

But he was all the more intoxicated by what people had built in Vienna. The Ringstraße alone! When he saw it for the first time, it appeared to him with its fairytale-like magnificent buildings as the realization of his boldest artistic dreams. It took a long time before he could even process this overwhelming impression. Only gradually did he find his way around this grandiose collection of modern monumental buildings. How often I had to accompany him along the Ring. Then he would describe this or that building to me in detail, draw my attention to particulars, or describe the origin of the structure. He could actually stand for hours in front of a single building. Then he forgot not only the time but everything else around him. I did not understand this lengthy, circumstantial looking. Yet he already knew everything; indeed, he knew more to say about the individual buildings than most residents of this city. If I occasionally became impatient, he would snap at me harshly, asking if I were really his friend or not. If so, I would also have to share his interests. Then the lecture was continued. At home, he would then draw the floor plans, the longitudinal sections for me, or try to take on some interesting detail. He borrowed works that informed him about the history of the origin of the individual buildings. The Court Opera, Parliament, Burgtheater, St. Charles's Church, the Court Museums, the City Hall — he kept dragging in new books, including a general presentation of architecture. He drew my attention to the individual stylistic forms. In particular, he repeatedly pointed out how one could determine the solid achievements of local craftsmanship in the individual execution of the buildings on the Ringstraße.

When it came to getting to know a certain structure, he was never satisfied with the external impression. I was always amazed at how well-informed he was about side portals, staircases, even little-known entrances or back gates. He tried to get close to the building from all sides. He hated nothing more than intrusive, pompous facades that were intended to hide some inferior floor plan solution. Beautiful facades were always suspicious to him. Plaster appeared to him as an unsound material that a master builder should abstain from. He allowed himself to be fooled by absolutely nothing and often proved to me that this or that solution, intended merely for visual effect, was pure bluff. Thus, the Ringstraße became a living object of study for him, against which he could measure his architectural knowledge and demonstrate his views.

At that time, plans for the design of large squares were already emerging. I can remember his explanations exactly. For example, the Heldenplatz, located between the Hofburg and the Volksgarten, appeared to him as a virtually ideal solution for mass rallies, not merely because the semicircle of the building complexes not only united the gathered masses in a unique form, but also because every individual standing in the crowd, wherever they turned, received great monumental impressions. I considered these reflections to be the idle play of an exaggerated imagination, but I had to participate in such experiments again and again. Adolf also loved Schwarzenbergplatz very much. Sometimes, during a break from the Court Opera, we would run over to this square to admire the luminous fountain rising fabulously out of the darkness of the night. That was a spectacle entirely to his liking. Incessantly the foaming masses rose up, while different colored spotlights made the water appear at one moment flaming red, then glowing yellow, then again radiant blue. Color and movement achieved an incredible abundance of nuances and light effects, which spread a breath of the unreal, even the celestial, over the entire square.

Certainly, starting from the architecture of the Ringstraße, great projects also occupied him during his time in Vienna: concert halls, theaters, museums, palaces, exhibitions. But his way of planning gradually took a different direction. At first, these monumental buildings were in a certain sense so perfect that even his unruly will to build found nothing more to change or improve in them. This had been different in Linz. Apart from perhaps the heavy, massive bulk of the old castle, he had always been dissatisfied with the buildings he had seen in Linz. No wonder, then, if he countered the narrow-chested Linz City Hall, wedged between the townhouses of the main square and by no means representative, with a new, more worthy solution and finally, during our walks through the city, gradually rebuilt all of Linz. It was different with Vienna. Not only because it was difficult for him, purely in terms of space, to grasp and judge the structure of the giant city, which had grown to enormous dimensions, as a unity, but because with growing political insight he also increasingly addressed the necessity of healthy, practical housing, especially for the broad mass of the population. In Linz, it had been more or less indifferent to him how the people affected by his large building projects would feel about his planned changes. In Vienna, however, he gradually began to build for the people. What he presented to me there in long, nightly conversations, what he drew and planned, was no longer, as in Linz, building for the sake of building, but a conscious planning that took into account the necessities and requirements of the residents. In Linz still a purely architectural, in Vienna a social building—that is how one could describe this further development.

It was certainly also conditioned, seen purely from the outside, by the fact that Adolf still felt relatively comfortable in Linz, especially in the nice Urfahr apartment. In contrast, in the gloomy, sunless rear building of Stumpergasse in Vienna, he felt every morning upon waking, when he saw the bare walls and the desolate view, anew that building was not, as he had previously thought, primarily a task of representation, but rather a public health problem that ought to liberate the broad masses from their wretched emergency housing.

"By the palaces of the Ringstraße, thousands of unemployed loitered, and beneath this *via triumphalis* of old Austria, the homeless lived in the twilight and mud of the sewers." With these words in "Mein Kampf," Hitler announced that shift in perspective, typical of those weeks and months, which led him from the reverent admiration of a grand, imperial architecture to a consideration of social misery. "I still shudder today when I think of those pitiful dens of habitation, of hostels and mass quarters, of those somber images of filth, repulsive dirt, and worse."

Adolf had told me that during the past winter, when he had still been in Vienna alone, he had often visited the public warming rooms to save on heating material, which the poor cannon stove devoured in large quantities without providing lasting warmth. There, a heated room was available free of charge and newspapers were provided in sufficient numbers. I assume that from the conversations of the people he met in these warming rooms, Adolf gained his first shattering insights into the housing misery of the giant city.

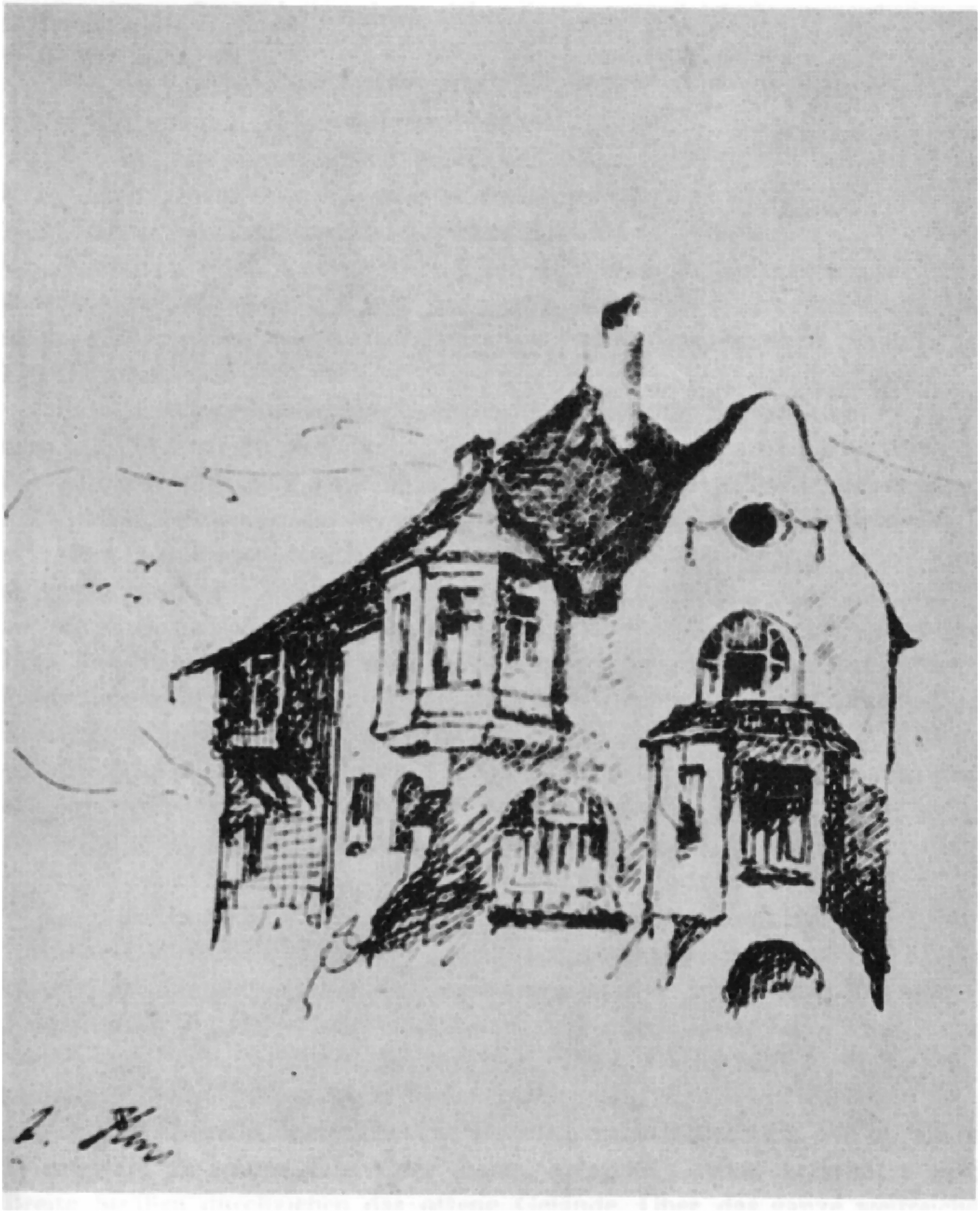
During the search for an apartment, with which my arrival in Vienna had been celebrated, so to speak, I had received a foretaste of what awaited us in this city in terms of misery, need, and uncleanness. Through dark, musty backyards, up stairs, down stairs, across desolate, disgustingly dirty hallways, past doors behind which adults and children crowded together shared the narrow, sunless space, the people as decayed and wretched as their surroundings—the impression has remained as unforgettable to me as its reverse side: that in the only house that would have somewhat corresponded to our health and aesthetic wishes, we encountered that intensified depravity which, in the form of the seductive Potiphar, appeared even more repulsive to us than the plight of the common people.

There followed nocturnal hours in which Adolf, pacing back and forth between the door and the piano, described the causes of these desolate housing conditions to me in drastic words. He began with our own house. On on an area that would hardly suffice for a proper garden, three building complexes are crowded together, standing in each other's way and depriving one another of light, air, and the possibility of movement. Why! Because the man who acquired this plot of land wants to profit from it as much as possible. He must therefore build as densely as possible and as high as he can, for the more such primitive living-boxes he piles on top of each other, the more he takes in. The individual tenant, for his part, must now see to it that he squeezes as much as possible out of the apartment. He therefore lets out — see our good Mrs. Zakreys — individual rooms, often the best ones, to subtenants. And the subtenant crowds together to make room for yet another "night-sleeper." Thus, one wants to profit from the other. And the result! That everyone, except the landlord, does not have enough space to live. The basement apartments, which receive neither light and sun nor air, are also a crying shame. If this is already unbearable for adults, children must perish in them. Adolf's lecture ended in a furious attack against land speculation and the exploitative landlord regime. A word of his still rings in my ears, which I heard then for the first time: these "professional landlords" who make a business out of the housing misery of the masses! The poor tenant usually does not know them at all, for they do not live in their tenement barracks, God forbid!, but out in Hietzing somewhere or over wine in Grinzing in elegant villas, where they have in rich abundance what they begrudge others.

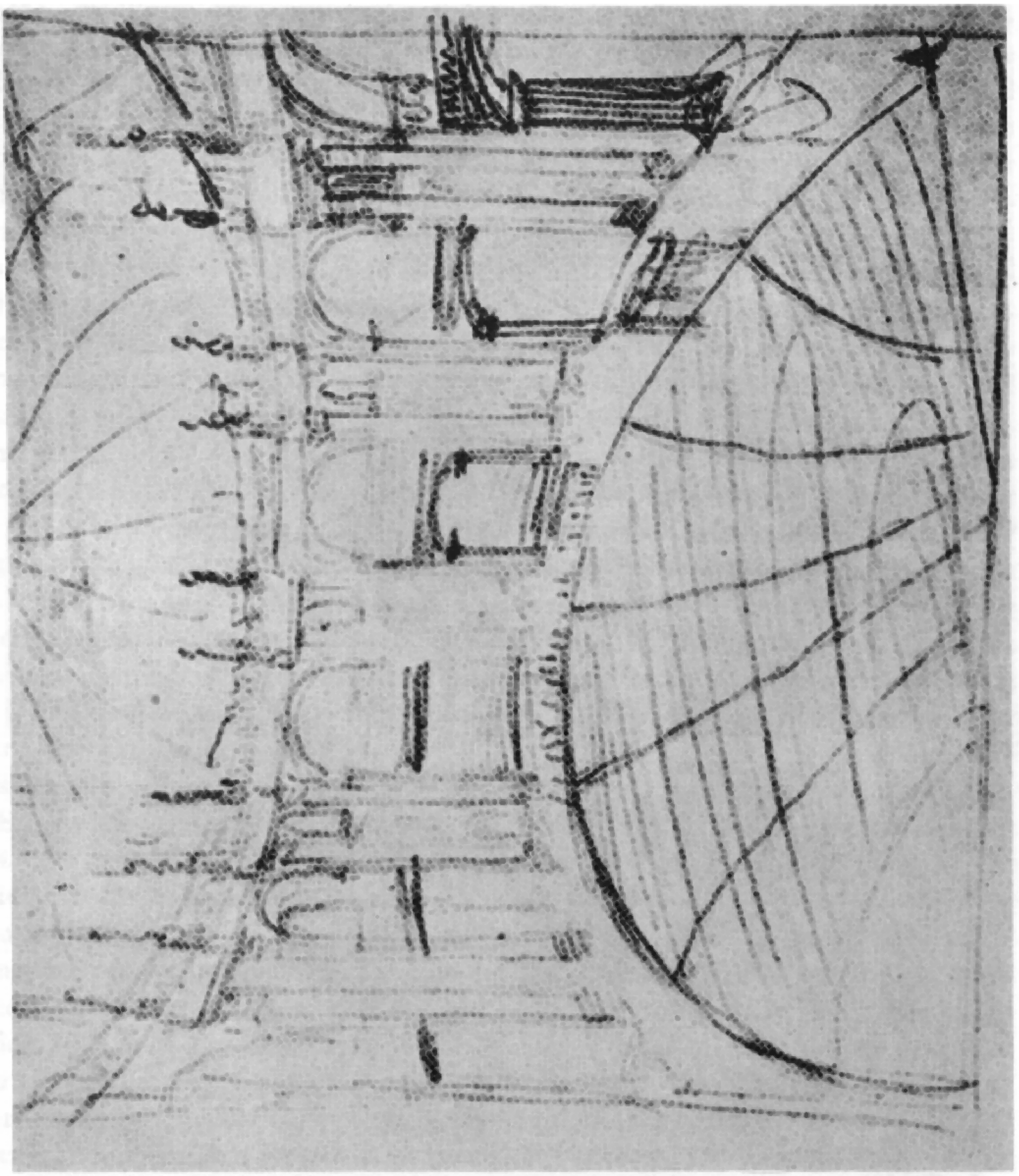
Another time, Adolf began his observations from the tenant's side. What does such a poor devil need to live decently? Light — the houses must stand free. Gardens must be laid out, play areas for children — air, the sky must be visible, something green, a modest piece of nature. But look at our rear building, it was said then. The sun only shines on the roof. The air — we'd rather not talk about that at all. The water — a single tap out in the hallway, to which eight parties must run with buckets and pails. The highly unhygienic toilet shared by the whole floor, for which one almost needs a rotational schedule to use it. And besides that, everywhere — the bedbugs!

When I occasionally asked Adolf in the following weeks — I already knew by then that he had not been admitted to the Academy — where he was staying during the day, I received the answer: "I am working on the solution to the housing misery in Vienna and am conducting certain studies for this purpose. I have to be out and about a lot for that."

This was the time when he often spent the whole night over plans and



Ink drawing by Adolf Hitler of a villa newly built at that time in Stockbauernstraße in Linz, which Hitler liked extraordinarily



Design by the eighteen-year-old Hitler for the construction of a large concert hall in Linz. This sketch is characteristic of his work.

drawings. But he said nothing about it. And I continued not to ask about it.

But then, I believe it was towards the end of the month of March, it was said: "Now I will be away for three days."

When Adolf returned on the fourth day, he was dead tired. God knows where he had been running around, where he had slept, and how he had hungered again. From his sparse information, I gathered that he had walked towards Vienna "from the outside," perhaps from Stockerau or from the Marchfeld, to inform himself about the stretches of land available for the thinning out of the city. Again, the night was worked through. Then finally, I got to see the project.

First, simple floor plan drawings: workers' apartments with a minimum of rooms: kitchen, living room, separate sleeping facilities for parents and children, water in the kitchen, toilet and — which at that time was still an unheard-of novelty — a bath! Then Adolf showed me designs of the individual house types, neatly drawn in Indian ink. I remember it so clearly because these drawings remained pinned to the wall for weeks and Adolf kept coming back to talk about them. In view of our sub-tenant existence, lacking air and light, the contrast between our own surroundings and these graceful residential houses located in the open became particularly clear to me, for as soon as the gaze slipped from the pretty drawing, it fell on the crumbling, poorly whitewashed wall, on which one could still notice the traces of our nightly hunt for bedbugs. This vivid contrast has indelibly impressed the extensive and generous plans of my friend upon me.

The tenement barracks will be demolished. With this lapidary sentence, Adolf began his work. I would have been surprised if it had been otherwise, for he went all out in everything he planned and detested half-measures and compromises. Life itself then took care of that. His task, however, was to solve the problem radically, that is, from the root. The land and soil will be withdrawn from private speculation. The areas that become free in the demolished workers' districts must be further enlarged by wide areas located in front of the Vienna Woods on both banks of the Danube. Broad streets run through the open terrain. A wide-meshed railway network is laid out over the entire extensive building land. Instead of the large central stations, individual, only locally oriented stations are distributed favorably in the terrain and connected to the city center, serving a specific area and establishing the most favorable, time-saving connections between home and workplace. At that time, no revolutionary significance was yet attributed to the motor vehicle. Still dominating...

in the cityscape of Vienna, the horse-drawn cabs. The bicycle, which in our childhood had been a risky piece of sports equipment, was now gradually becoming a cheap and practical means of transport. However, at that time, only the railway could handle mass transport.

What Adolf had designed were by no means single-family houses or private homes of the kind built today, nor was he concerned with "settlements." Rather, he started from a more or less schematic breaking up of large residential blocks. Thus, the smallest unit emerged, cleanly designed in floor plan and sketched in elevation: the four-family house, a one-story, well-structured building that combined two apartments on each floor. This basic unit formed the predominant house type. Where traffic conditions and working circumstances required it, this four-family house was to be moved closer together and combined into residential complexes for eight or sixteen families. Yet even these house types remained "close to the ground," meaning they were one-story and were enlivened by gardens, children's playgrounds, and groups of trees. They were not permitted to exceed the sixteen-family house.

Thus, the house types necessary for the loosening up of the city were established, and my friend could now proceed to the execution. Using a large city map, which no longer had enough room on the table and therefore had to be spread over the grand piano, Adolf determined the railway network and the streets. Industrial centers were marked, and the residential complexes were coordinated with them. I was in the way everywhere during this grand planning. Indeed, in the entire room, there was not a foot's breadth of floor left that had not been put into the service of this task. If Adolf had not pursued his business with such grim seriousness, I would have regarded the whole thing as an interesting but idle pastime. In fact, however, our own housing calamity oppressed me so much that I entered into this work with almost the same doggedness as my friend—doubtless the reason why so many details of it have remained in my memory.

In his way, Adolf thought of everything. I still remember that he was preoccupied with the question of whether this newly arisen Vienna needed taverns or not. Adolf rejected alcohol just as much as nicotine. If one did not smoke or drink, why should one go to a tavern? In any case, he found a solution for this new Vienna that was as radical as it was generous: a new national drink! In Linz, I once had to wallpaper some rooms in the office building of the Franck chicory coffee factory. Adolf visited me at that work back then. At that time, the company issued a very good, ice-cold coffee drink to its workers, a glass of which cost only one Heller cost. Adolf had liked this drink so much that he kept coming back to it. He claimed that if every household were supplied with this cheap and wholesome drink or with similar non-alcoholic products, one could save oneself the taverns. When I countered that the Viennese, as far as I knew them, would hardly give up their wine, he replied brusquely: "You won't be asked about that!" In other words: "And neither will the Viennese."

Adolf also expressed himself particularly sharply about those states that had monopolized the sale of tobacco, which included Austria. By doing so, he argued, the state was ruining the health of its own citizens. Therefore, all tobacco factories should be closed and the import of smoking materials prohibited. However, he did not find a substitute for tobacco in the sense of the "people's drink."

In general, the closer Adolf came in his thoughts to the realization of his project, the more utopian the whole matter became. As far as the planning was concerned, everything still had hands and feet. But in the execution, Adolf operated with concepts under which I could not imagine anything proper. As a subtenant who had to hand over ten good crowns—certainly earned with difficulty by my father—every month for a half-share in a bug-infested shack, I had full understanding for the fact that in this New Vienna there were no landlords and no tenants. The land belonged to the state and the houses were not private property either, but were managed by a kind of housing cooperative. Instead of rent, one therefore paid a contribution toward the construction of the house or a kind of housing tax. I could follow that far. But then I met with the fiercest resistance with my pathetic question: "Yes, but such a costly building project cannot be financed with that. Who is supposed to pay for it at all?" Angrily, Adolf hurled his answer at me, of which I did not understand very much. I can no longer remember this dispute in detail, as it was conducted entirely in abstract terms. However, certain regularly recurring expressions remained in my memory, which impressed me all the more the less they actually signified.

The fundamental questions of the entire project were solved, as Adolf formulated it, "in the storm of the revolution." It was the first time that this weighty phrase was uttered in our impoverished dwelling. I do not know whether Adolf drew the inspiration for this from his extensive reading. In any case, whenever he was stuck in his train of thought, the bold phrase "storm of the revolution" was always there, which then gave his thoughts and ideas ever new momentum, without him ever having explained it. One could, I found, imagine everything...

imagine or nothing. Adolf stayed with "everything," I for a long time with "nothing," until he, with his suggestive eloquence, had also convinced me that only a mighty revolutionary storm needed to sweep over the weary old earth to call forth everything that he had long held ready in his thoughts and plans, much like a mild late-summer rain lets mushrooms sprout up in every nook and cranny.

Another constantly recurring expression was the term "German ideal state," which, alongside the concept of the "Reich," played a special role in his thinking. This "ideal state" was now determined both nationally and socially. Socially, above all, with regard to the misery of the working masses. More and more intensively, Adolf occupied himself with the thought of a state that would do justice to the social requirements of the time. The image still remained unclear in detail and was strongly determined by his reading. Thus, he chose the term "ideal state"—perhaps he had read it in one of his numerous books—and left it to time to develop this initially very generally fixed ideal state in detail, naturally with the final orientation toward the "Reich."

A third term, which in that era had already become a common formula, was likewise picked up by Adolf for the first time in connection with these bold construction plans: social reform! In this word, too, much had found a place that was still very unfinished in his mind. But the eager study of political writings and the attendance of parliamentary sessions, to which he also compelled me, gradually filled the term social reform with concrete content.

If one day the "storm of revolution" broke in and the "ideal state" arose, the long-overdue "social reform" would also become a reality. Then the moment would have come to tear down the interest-castles of the "professional landlords" and to begin the construction of his housing types in the beautiful, charming meadowlands behind Nußdorf.

I have told of these plans of my friend in such detail because I feel they are extremely typical for the further development of his character and his views during his stay in Vienna. It had been clear to me from the beginning, however, that my friend would not remain indifferent to the mass misery of the big city. For that, I knew him too well and knew that he closed his eyes to nothing and, given his whole nature, was incapable of living past any general phenomena with lack of involvement or indifference. But that these experiences in the Viennese suburbs gave such an unheard-of boost to his entire being, I would never have believed. I had, after all, held my friend in the innermost part of his being for an artist and would have understood it, if he, in the face of these masses seemingly sinking hopelessly into misery, had indeed been outraged, but had internally and clearly distanced himself from these events so as not to be dragged into the abyss by the irredeemable doom that lay over this city. I counted on his sensitivity, his aesthetic feeling, his constant fear of coming into physical contact with strangers — he only rarely and only to a few people offered his hand! — and thought to myself that this would be enough to distance himself from the masses with all clarity. And he did so. But only as far as personal interaction was concerned. With his whole, overflowing heart, however, he stood at that time in the ranks of those disinherited by fate. It was not pity in the usual sense that he felt for the masses who had become disenfranchised. That would have been too little for him. He did not only suffer with them, he also lived for them; he directed all his thoughts and thinking only toward redeeming these people from their need and distress. Certainly, this glowing will for a total reorganization of all life was, viewed personally, the answer he gave to fate when it had led him, blow after blow, into misery. Only through this far-reaching, generous work, which was intended "for all" and addressed to "all," did he find his inner balance again. The weeks of gloomy forebodings and heavy emotional depressions were over. Confidence and courage filled him once more.

But for the time being, good old Maria Zakreys was the only one who occupied herself with these plans. More accurately, she did not occupy herself with them, for she had given up trying to bring order to this jumble of plans, drawings, and drafts. It was enough, after all, if the two students from Linz paid their rent on time.

From Linz, Adolf only wanted to make a beautiful, graceful city, which was to be lifted out of its provincial paltriness by representative buildings. Vienna, however, he remodeled into a modern residential city, where he was not concerned with representation — he left that entirely to imperial Vienna — but rather that the masses who had become homeless, alienated from the soil and thus also from the people, could gain a firm foothold again.

The old imperial city was transformed on the drawing board of a nineteen-year-old youth, who lived in a gloomy rear building in the suburb of Mariahilf, into a city growing far into the open countryside, flooded with light and filled with life, composed of four-, eight-, and sixteen-family houses.

The decision to become an architect was, at that time, unshakeably fixed for Adolf. How he intended to find his way into practice after this intensive self-study, given that he could never present certificates or diplomas, caused him no headache whatsoever. This was hardly discussed between the two of us, so convinced was my friend that by the time his studies were completed, the times would have changed—whether of their own accord or forcibly through the "storm of revolution"—to such an extent that formal qualification would no longer be the deciding factor, but rather actual ability. He himself writes about these studies:

"That I served my love for architecture with fiery zeal was, of course, natural. To me, alongside music, she appeared as the queen of the arts: my occupation with her under such circumstances was not 'work,' but the highest happiness. I could read or draw late into the night; I never grew tired. Thus my faith was strengthened that my beautiful dream of the future, even if after many years, would indeed become a reality. I was firmly convinced that I would one day make a name for myself as an architect."

As far as that went, everything concerning his future was clear for Adolf. Already in Linz, he had forestalled what he considered to be the one-sided, unjust, and uncomprehending treatment by the school by plunging with fiery zeal into a self-chosen course of study. The decision to take the same path in Vienna, where he faced a very similar situation, was truly not difficult for him. He railed against the outdated, ossified bureaucracy of the Academy. He spoke of snares that had been cunningly laid—I still remember this sentence exactly!—for the sole purpose of hindering his advancement. But he would yet prove to these incapable, senile fools that he could get further without them than with them. From the furious tirades my friend unleashed upon the Academy, I gained the impression that these professors, through their brusque rejection, had unintentionally mobilized a greater zeal for learning and more significant working energies in this young man than they could ever have achieved through their instruction.

But another question stood before my friend: What was he to live on during the time of his studies? Years could pass before he would really be able to establish an existence for himself as a master builder. It seemed to me altogether as if my friend's self-study would never come to an end. Certainly, he studied with incredible diligence and a willpower that one would never have expected from his body, which was weakened by constant malnutrition. But this study was by no means directed toward practical goals. Quite the opposite! He lost himself again and again in extensive planning and speculation. When I used my music studies, which had proceeded extremely systematically from the beginning, as a comparison, I had to realize that Adolf went much too far in his studies. He pulled in everything that had any connection whatsoever to the art of building. In doing so, he took everything with unheard-of precision and thoroughness. How was this ever to lead to a conclusion? Quite apart from the fact that new ideas constantly beset him, which led him far away from his professional studies.

The comparison of his boundless, unsystematic studying with my precisely regulated studies at the conservatory did not exactly benefit our friendship, if only because we naturally had to come into conflict during our domestic activities. When I was then also assigned female students for tutoring by Professor Boschetti, the contrast intensified more and more. Now one could see, he said, how much his streak of bad luck followed him; everything had conspired against him, and for him there was no possibility of earning anything.

So one evening, it must have been immediately after a visit from one of my students, I took the opportunity to urge him to look around for some kind of earning opportunity. Of course, if one is lucky, one can give tutoring to young ladies, he began. I explained to him that this had happened entirely without my doing. Professor Boschetti had simply assigned these students to me, I replied; it was a pity that they had to be taught harmony, not architecture. Moreover, I continued decisively, if I had his talent, I would have looked for a side income long ago.

He listened to me with interest, almost as if it were not about himself at all. I immediately fired away.

Drawing, for example—he could really do that. His teachers had confirmed that to him as well. How would it be if he looked around at a newspaper or a publishing house as a draftsman? There he could perhaps illustrate books. Or certain daily events would have to be captured in rapid...

captured in hastily thrown-together sketches. He replied evasively, saying he was glad that I expected such tasks of him. Furthermore, he suggested it would be better to leave this kind of reporting to the photographers. Even the best illustrator could not be as fast as they were.

How about a position as a theater critic, I continued. That was a profession he was actually already practicing, for after every performance he produced a critique that was indeed very sharp and radical, yet interesting and insightful. Why should I be the only resident of Vienna to hear his judgment? One would have to see about getting in touch with a leading newspaper. However, he would have to guard against too harsh a one-sidedness. He wanted to know what I meant by that. The Italian, the Russian, the French opera also had their right to exist, I went on. One must also allow for foreign composers, for art, even if it springs from a specific ethnicity, could not be confined by national boundaries. We clashed violently, for as soon as it came to questions of music, I stood my ground. I was not speaking for myself alone, but felt like a representative of the institute where I was a student. Although I fully shared Adolf's enthusiasm for Richard Wagner, I did not want to be pinned down one-sidedly for that reason. But he held unteachably to his standpoint. I still remember well how, in my excitement, I hurled the words of the final chorus from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at Adolf: "Be embraced, you millions, this kiss for the whole world!" The artist's work must belong to the whole world. So, trouble already, even before he had taken up the position of an opera critic, Adolf remarked. With that, this plan too was buried.

Adolf wrote a great deal at that time. I had discovered that it was predominantly a matter of plays, specifically dramas. He took the material from the world of Germanic legends or German history. Hardly one of these plays was ever actually finished. But perhaps money could be made with them after all. Adolf also let me read some of his drafts. I noticed the importance he attached to a production that was as grand as possible. Apart from that drama dealing with the problem of Christianization, I can no longer remember any of these pieces, but I do remember that they required an enormous expenditure. We were used to great demands being placed on a stage through Richard Wagner. But what Adolf had designed there completely put the Master in the shade. I understood something of the staging of an opera and did not hold back with my concerns. No director could accept his plays with this scenario that challenged heaven and hell, I explained to him. He absolutely had to, in matters of equipment...

modest. In general, it would be best not to write operas, but rather simple, possibly cheerful pieces that the public would like to see. It would be most advantageous if he wrote some unpretentious comedy. Unpretentious? That was all it took to send him into a rage. This attempt also ended negatively.

Gradually I realized that my efforts were futile. Even if I had persuaded Adolf long enough until he submitted his drawings or literary works to some editorial office or publisher, it would have led to a falling out between him and his clients in the shortest time, for he allowed absolutely no interference in these matters, certainly not even if his performance had been decently paid. He simply could not stand receiving orders from strangers, for he set enough orders for himself.

So I took another path. Since I was in a better financial position than he was, thanks to the care of my parents and also through the tutoring lessons I received, I helped him out wherever possible, preferably in such a way that he did not notice it at all, for he was extremely sensitive and touchy in these matters. Only on hikes and excursions did he allow me to treat him as my guest.

Later, when our paths had already parted, Adolf found a solution to this problem in Vienna that was very characteristic of him, through which he at least earned a modest living, but was by no means forced to accept orders from others; on the contrary, a solution in which he remained, so to speak, his own employer. Since he was less gifted in drawing figures than in architectural subjects, he drew famous Viennese buildings, preferably the Karlskirche, the Parliament, the Church of Maria am Gestade, and similar motifs, and sold these very cleanly and precisely executed, hand-colored drawings wherever an opportunity arose. He writes about this:

> "I was already working independently at that time (meaning the years 1909 and 1910) as a small-scale draftsman and watercolorist. As bitter as this was in terms of earnings—it really was hardly enough to live on—it was just as good for my chosen profession." In other words: he preferred to starve his way through rather than give up his independence.

Regarding the specialized studies that Adolf pursued at that time, I cannot give a judgment in detail because I lack the factual prerequisites for it. Also, I was too busy with my own studies to have had the time and leisure to get an overview of his work. I only saw that he increasingly surrounded himself with technical literature. An extensive history of architecture remains in my memory because even then he enjoyed picking out a picture in it at random...

to open it, covering the explanation below with his hand and telling me from memory what this picture represented, such as the Cathedral of Chartres or the Palazzo Pitti in Florence. His memory was truly admirable. I cannot remember ever having established a limit to his capacity for retention. His extraordinary memory naturally served his self-study very well.

He drew tirelessly. I had the impression that he had already acquired the professional preliminary knowledge necessary for these drawing works in Linz, though only from books. I do not remember Adolf ever having sought an opportunity to test his knowledge practically or at least to participate in seminar-like exercises in architectural drawing. He was not at all concerned with meeting people of the same professional interests and discussing problems of mutual interest. Much rather than meeting with experts, he sat alone on his bench near the Gloriette and, with the help of his books, conducted dialogues with himself in his mind. This unusual way of making a certain field of knowledge his own with passionate devotion, of penetrating deeply into its essence and yet anxiously avoiding any contact with practice, reminds me in its strange self-centeredness of Adolf's relationship with Stefanie. Even his boundless love for architecture, his passion for building, remained, despite the liveliest participation, basically just a game of the mind. Just as he ran to the Landstraße to see Stefanie when he wanted to reassure himself of his feelings for her in a realistic form, he hurried from the exaggerated atmosphere of his self-study into the Ringstraße to regain his balance through the immediate impression of the various monumental buildings.

I also gradually understood why my friend clung with such one-sided preference to these Ringstraße buildings, although in my opinion the impression of older buildings, original in their style, such as St. Stephen's Cathedral or the Belvedere, was much more genuine, stronger, and more convincing. But Adolf did not like the buildings of the Baroque period at all; they were too overloaded for him. The magnificent buildings of the Ringstraße had only been erected after the demolition of the fortifications surrounding the inner city, thus dating only from the second half of the last century and by no means possessed a uniform style. On the contrary! Almost all styles developed in earlier times were repeated in these buildings. The Parliament was built in a classical, or rather pseudo-Hellenic style, the City Hall was Neo-Gothic, the Burgtheater, which Adolf particularly admired, was Late Renaissance. Admittedly, they all shared a tendency toward the grand, Representative style, which particularly attracted my friend. But what led him to occupy himself again and again with these buildings, even to proclaim the Ringstraße as his professional internship, so to speak, was the circumstance that he could still study the history of their origin without difficulty in these buildings created by the previous generation, reconstruct the plans, and, so to speak, build each individual structure once more for himself, and could visualize the fate and achievement of the great master builders of that time—a Theophil Hansen, Semper, Hasenauer, a Siccardsburg, a van der Null.

With concern, I discovered how new thoughts, experiences, and plans crossed and covered my friend's professional studies. Insofar as these areas of interest related to architecture, they were included by him in his overall studies. But there was much that stood diametrically opposed to his professional plans. Furthermore, political matters, compared to the Linz period, gained an ever-stronger preponderance over him. When I occasionally asked Adolf how these far-reaching problems, which we encountered, for example, during our visits to Parliament, were connected to his professional studies, I received the answer: "One can only build when the political prerequisites for it have been created." Sometimes I was also dismissed quite harshly. Thus, I remember that Adolf once replied to my question about how he envisioned the solution to a certain problem: "Even if I had already thought this problem through to the end, I would not tell you, because you would not be able to comprehend it anyway." But even if he was often enough dismissive, moody, erratic, and by no means conciliatory, I could never be angry with him, because these unpleasant sides of his nature were outshone by the fire of an enthusiastic soul.

In the future, I refrained from asking him about professional matters. It was much better if I went my own way in silence. There he could see how I envisioned the achievement of a firm professional goal. After all, I had not even attended the lower classes of the Realschule like he had, but only the Bürgerschule, and yet I was now a conservatory student on equal footing with the graduates. But with my friend, his professional studies proceeded in exactly the opposite way to mine. While, as a rule, professional studies become more concrete, one-sided, and specialized over the years and gain a clear reference to the practical, with Adolf they became increasingly general, multifaceted, abstract, and moved further and further away from practice. The more stubbornly he repeated the slogan to himself: "I want to become a master builder," the more this goal evaporated in reality. He reached out further and further in his studies, drawing in ever new areas. It was the typical attitude of a young person, for whom the concrete profession stands in the way of fulfilling the calling that he feels within himself.

Regarding this study, he says himself:

"Since my early youth, I have endeavored to read in the right way, and in this, I was supported in the most fortunate manner by memory and understanding. And viewed in such a sense, the Vienna period was particularly fruitful and valuable for me..."

"I read infinitely much back then, and thoroughly at that. Whatever free time remained from my work was spent entirely on my studies... I firmly believe today that, in general, all creative thoughts basically appear in youth, provided such thoughts exist at all. I distinguish between the wisdom of age, which can only be regarded as a greater thoroughness and caution resulting from the experiences of a long life, and the genius of youth, which pours out thoughts and ideas in inexhaustible fertility, without initially even being able to process them due to the sheer abundance of their number. It provides the building materials and future plans from which wiser age takes the stones, hews them, and carries out the construction, provided that the so-called wisdom of age has not stifled the genius of youth."

So it was with my friend: books, always books! I cannot imagine Adolf at all without books. At home, he piled them up around him. He always had to have a book that occupied him around him. Even when he was not currently reading it, it had to be present for him. When he left home, he had at least one book under his arm. Sometimes, taking books with him became a problem. Then he would rather give up nature and the open sky than the book.

Books were his world. In Linz, in order to be able to reach any desired book, he had enrolled in three libraries at the same time. In Vienna, he used the Court Library, and so eagerly that I once asked him in all seriousness whether he had intended to read through the entire library, for which I was, of course, only rudely rebuffed. Once he took me to the Court Library and led me into the great hall. I was almost overwhelmed by these enormous books piled up in entire walls and asked him how, in view of this overabundance of books, he got exactly the ones he needed. Then he wanted to introduce me to the handling of the catalog. But I only became even more confused.

When he read, hardly anything could disturb him. But he sometimes disturbed himself; for as soon as a book gripped him, he began to talk about it. Then I had to listen patiently, regardless of whether the topic interested me or not. Every now and then, in Linz even more frequently than in Vienna, he would push a...

book and demanded that I read it as his friend. In doing so, he was less concerned with me expanding my own knowledge than with him having a partner with whom he could discuss the contents of the book, even if this desired partner was often merely a listener.

Regarding the manner of reading a book correctly, he expressed himself in detail in his book in an account spanning more than three pages.

"I know people who read an infinite amount, book after book, letter by letter, and yet whom I would not wish to describe as 'well-read.' They certainly possess a vast amount of knowledge, but their brains do not understand how to carry out a classification and registration of this absorbed material."

In this respect, my friend was undoubtedly far superior to the average reader. For him, reading began with the selection of the books. Adolf possessed a very special instinct for poets and authors who had something to say to him. He never read books for distraction or to pass the time. Reading books was a deadly serious task for him. I often felt this clearly enough. Woe betide me if I did not take his reading seriously enough and perhaps tried to play etudes on the grand piano in the meantime.

The way Adolf approached a book was interesting. The most important thing to him was the overview, the table of contents. Only then did he set to work, whereby he by no means adhered to the given order, but literally picked out the essentials. But what he had once acquired in this way sat carefully classified and registered in his memory. A single reach—and it was ready again, and indeed as faithfully as if he had only just read it. I thought many times that nothing more could possibly fit in his head. And lo and behold—everything he had lugged over from Josefsplatz still found its place. It almost seemed that with the amount of material absorbed, the memory became better and better. For me, who had to honestly struggle with my workload, this was simply a miracle. Truly, in his brain there was room for an entire library.

If I am now to list, from the immense abundance of what Adolf read in Linz and later in Vienna, which books made a particular impression on him, I find myself in an awkward position. Unfortunately, I do not possess my friend's unique memory for the content of books. Experiences remain much more strongly in my memory than "readings." Thus, only very incidental things from Adolf's reading have actually remained in my memory.

The first rank among all books, as I have already mentioned, was held by the German heroic sagas. Unaffected by the respective mood and the...

external situation in which he found himself, they were taken up and read again and again. He had long known them all by heart. Nevertheless, he read them over and over again. The book he owned in Vienna was called, if I am not mistaken: "Legends of Gods and Heroes, Germanic-German Treasury of Sagas."

Adolf had already begun to read the classics in Linz. Of "Faust," he once said that this play contained more than the people of the present could grasp. In the Burgtheater, we even saw the second part once, if I am not mistaken, with Josef Kainz as Faust. Adolf was very moved and spoke of it for a long time. That he was particularly gripped by Schiller's "William Tell" is understandable. "The Robbers," on the other hand, strangely enough, did not please him much. Dante's "Divine Comedy" made a deep impression on him, although, in my estimation, he got hold of this work much too early. I know that he occupied himself with Herder; of Lessing, we saw "Minna von Barnhelm." He liked to read Stifter, probably also because he found in it the image of his native landscape, while Rosegger was, as he expressed it, too "popular" for him.

In addition, he occasionally picked up books that were in fashion at the time, more to form a judgment about the people who read these books than about the works themselves. Adolf found absolutely nothing in Ganghofer; on the other hand, he strongly advocated for Otto Ernst, whose works he knew thoroughly. Of modern dramas, we saw Frank Wedekind's "Spring Awakening" and "The Master of Palmyra" by Wilbrandt. Adolf read Ibsen's dramas in Vienna without receiving any particular impression from them. At least, I cannot remember any.

Of philosophical books, Schopenhauer was always around him, and later Nietzsche as well. However, I felt little of this, for he regarded these philosophers, so to speak, as his most intimate concern, as a private possession that he did not want to share with anyone. Perhaps this restraint was also due to the fact that we had something in common in our love for music, which made possible a much richer and more precious encounter for us than philosophy, which was somewhat remote to me.

In conclusion, I would also like to say the same about my friend's reading as I already emphasized in the description of his professional studies: He read an incredible amount and, with the help of his extraordinary memory, retained knowledge that far exceeded the level of someone not yet twenty years old, but he avoided any actual debate about it. Even if he occasionally urged me to read a certain book, he knew in advance that I was not an equal partner. Perhaps he chose the books he recommended I read based on this point of view. For him, it was not about "the other opinion," not for a discussion about the content. His relationship to books was also like his relationship to the outside world in general: with a glowing heart he took in everything reachable, yet he consciously kept everything that wanted to directly press upon him at arm's length.

He was a seeker, certainly. But he found in books only that which suited him. When I once asked him whether he really wanted to master his studies solely with his books alone, he looked at me in astonishment and said brusquely: "You need teachers, of course, I see that. For me they are superfluous." In the further course of the debate, he sometimes called me a "spiritual boarder" and a "parasite sitting at foreign tables."

I did not have the impression of Adolf, especially during our life together in Vienna, that he was looking for something specific in the immense abundance of books he piled up around him, such as foundations or views for his behavior, but that, conversely, he was merely seeking confirmation—perhaps more unconsciously than consciously—in these books for the foundations and views that were already present in him. Therefore, reading for him—perhaps apart from the "German Heroic Sagas"—was less edification than rather a kind of self-control.

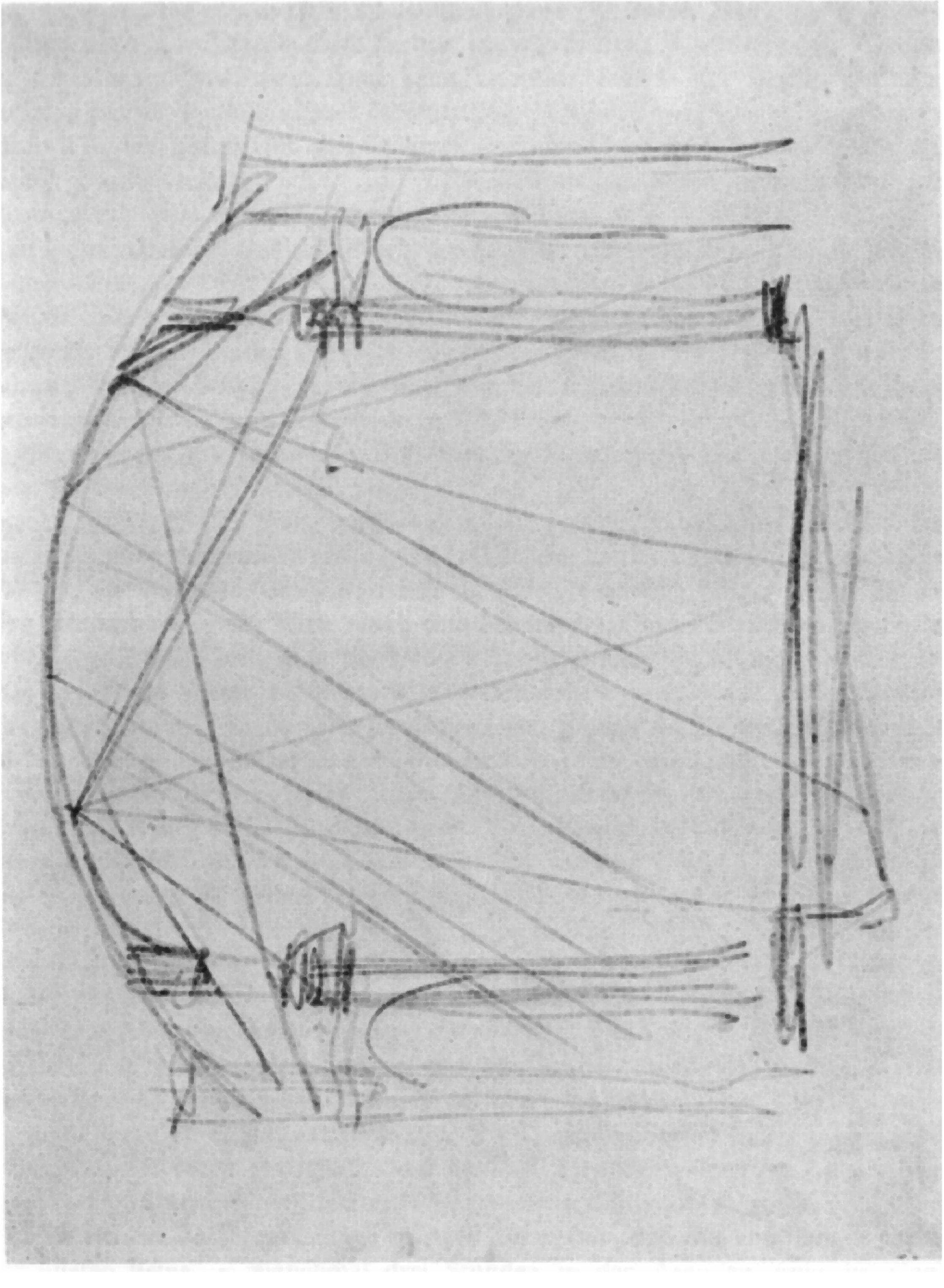
When I think of the numerous problems that occupied him in Vienna and in which I was able to participate, at the end of the observation there is usually some book about which Adolf then triumphantly told me: "You see, the man who wrote this is also exactly of my opinion."

AT THE COURT OPERA

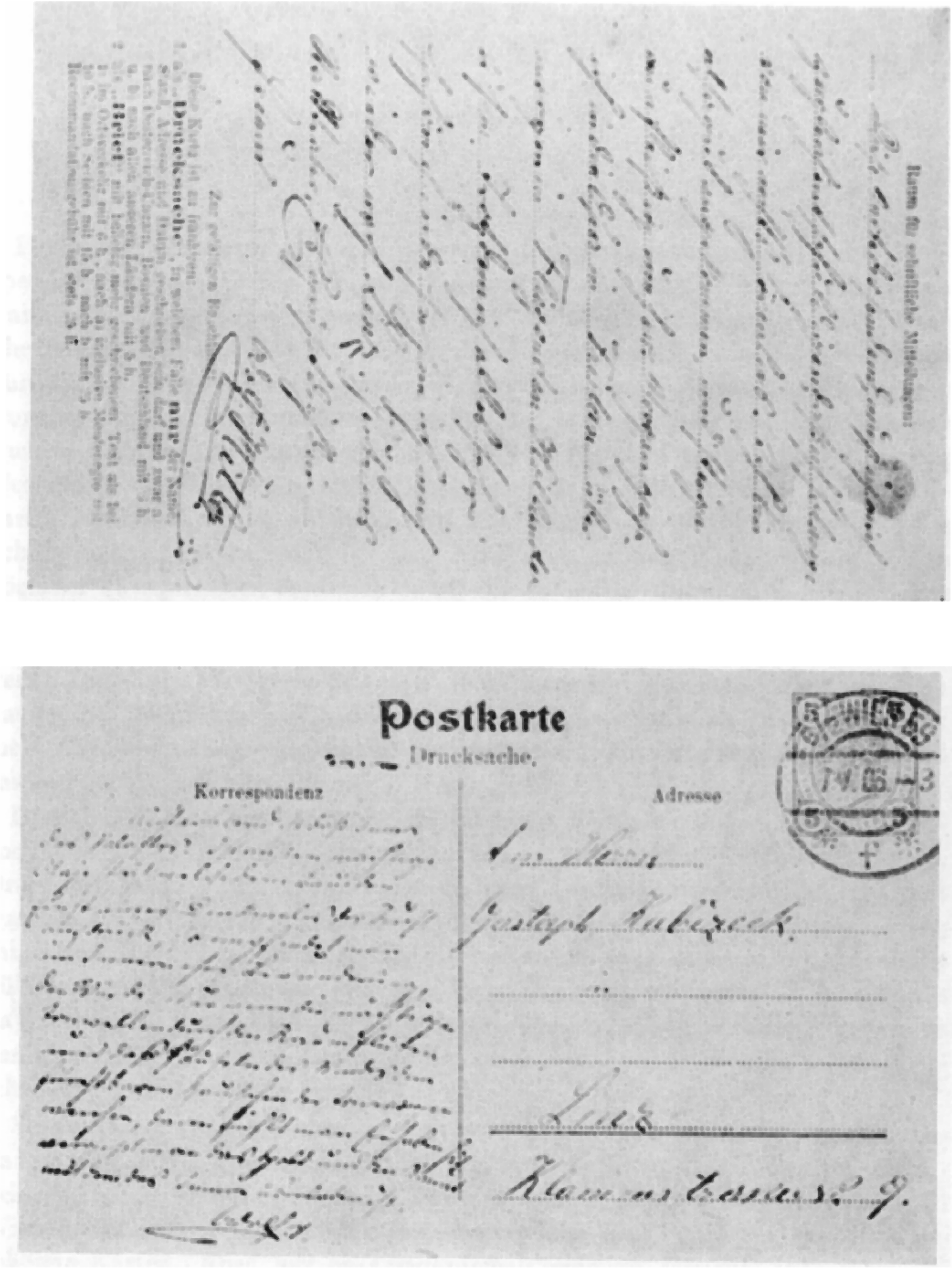
The highlight of our friendship was our joint visits to the Court Opera. For me, the memory of my friend is inseparably linked to these glorious experiences. In the solemn atmosphere of the Linz Theater, we had formed our youthful bond; in the premier opera house of Europe, we reaffirmed it time and again. Even though, as we grew older, the contrasts between the two of us became increasingly apparent and the differences in family circumstances, professional inclinations, and attitudes toward public and political life pushed us more and more perceptibly apart, the flaming enthusiasm for everything beautiful and sublime, which found its highest artistic expression in the performances of the Vienna Court Opera, bound us all the more closely together. In Linz, our mutual relationship had still been thoroughly harmonious and balanced. In Vienna, however, the conflicts and tensions grew, certainly also due to living together in one room. It was a stroke of luck that at the same time, the influence of the artistic experiences we received together also strengthened our friendship.

The Vienna Court Opera probably offered the highest prerequisites for a perfect artistic performance that could be imagined at that time. The orchestra, soloists, and choir were unsurpassed in their achievement. The conductor at that time was the unmatched Gustav Mahler, for whom Adolf also had the greatest admiration. We were particularly inspired by the productions of the brilliant set designer Professor Roller. In Wagner operas, we mostly heard soloists from Bayreuth. Taken together, this meant an artistic experience such as was otherwise possible nowhere else on this earth at that time. Our exuberant enthusiasm can be measured by this.

As has been the case at all times, we two, poor, unknown students, had to fight hard for the opportunity to participate in these performances back then. Although there were supposedly discounted tickets for the standing area in the stalls, which in Vienna just as in Linz represented the longed-for goal for us, we never got to see one, not even at the Conservatory. We therefore had to pay the full price — two crowns



Reverse side of the preceding sketch. Here, with a few strokes, Hitler illustrated the acoustic conditions of the Linz Tonhalle he planned to his musically interested friend.



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Gustav Kubizek

Linz

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Postcard greetings from Adolf Hitler from Vienna to his friend on the occasion of his first, still temporary stay in the imperial city. (This and the following originals from the author's collection)

— pay for it, a lot of money, when one considers that after deducting the rent for the entire month, Adolf had only fifteen crowns left from his pension. Even though we were full-paying visitors, we had to fight for these tickets because the crowd was too large. The box office opened one hour before the start of the performance. Two hours before the box office opened, admission to the corridor was granted. But to get into the corridor in time, one often had to line up under the arcades as early as noon. No matter how early one arrived, one was certainly not the first.

In the corridor was the queue, closed off by bronze railings, which led to the box office and was opened at the same time as the latter. Policemen constantly patrolled up and down to keep those waiting in check. When the queue was opened, everyone rushed toward it as if at a starting gun. In the process, a sharp corner had to be negotiated; many a person flew out of the turn on the smooth, paved floor during this race.

With the finally hard-won ticket in hand, the second race to the standing pit began. Fortunately, the way from the box office to there was not very far. The standing pit was located below the Imperial Box and possessed excellent acoustics. Women and girls were not admitted to the standing pit, a circumstance that Adolf appreciated very much. On the other hand, it was disadvantageous that the standing pit was divided in the middle by a bronze bar into two halves, one for civilians and one for the military. These young lieutenants, who in my friend's opinion went to the Court Opera less for the sake of the music than to enjoy the social event, only had to pay ten heller for their ticket to the standing pit, while we poor students were fleeced for twenty times that amount. Adolf always flew into a rage over this. When he then saw these elegantly dressed lieutenants, who, constantly yawning, could hardly wait for the intermission to promenade in the foyer, as proud as if they had just come from a box, he declared grimly that in this standing pit, artistic understanding and the admission price were inversely proportional to each other. Furthermore, the "military" half of the standing pit was hardly ever full, while in the civilian section, students, young employees, and workers stepped on each other's toes.

Just as the spot by one of the two columns in the standing pit of the Linz Landestheater had been, the so-called "Kipfel" (croissant) in the standing pit of the Vienna Court Opera was the goal of our desires. This space, shaped like a butter croissant and accommodating about ten visitors, was formed by the rounded course of the arches on one side and by the end of the last row of the parquet on the other. Anyone standing in the "Kipfel" could lean so heavily on the metal bar that their legs, weary from long standing—sometimes three hours in the arcades, two in the corridor, four to five hours during the performance—were somewhat relieved.

Among the visitors to the standing stalls, it was considered an unwritten law that a place once fought for could no longer be contested by anyone. This order, maintained with admirable discipline, made it possible for the visitor to leave the standing stalls during intermissions. I remember with pleasure how, at the very moment some insolent fellow tried to occupy a place that did not belong to him, the civilian standing stalls rose as one man and ushered the intruder out.

It was unpleasant, however, that the claqueurs usually gathered in the standing stalls. This spoiled many a performance for us. The procedure common at that time was very simple: some singer, male or female, who wanted applause at certain points in their part, hired a claque for the evening. Their leader procured the tickets for his people and also paid them a fixed price. At that time, there were professional claqueurs at the Court Opera who "worked" according to strictly fixed rates. Thus, sometimes, often at a completely inappropriate moment, furious applause would break out in our midst. This could drive us into a bright rage. I remember how we once hissed down a group of claqueurs during "Tannhäuser" at the end of the Rome Narrative. When one of them, although the orchestra continued to play, bellowed "Bravo" loudly, Adolf thrust his fist into the fellow's ribs. When we left the theater, the head of the claque was already standing at the entrance with a policeman. Adolf was interrogated on the spot and defended himself so brilliantly that the policeman let him go. He even had enough time to run after the claqueur in question on the open street to deal him a resounding slap in the face.

During the intermissions, an old factotum usually appeared in the standing stalls and offered glasses of fresh water on a tray. A glass cost five Heller. But the old man's half-loud "Water, pleasant," sung in a foreign accent, sometimes sounded like a deliverance when we were exhausted from hours of tension.

Since overcoats also had to be checked in the standing stalls, we fundamentally went to the Opera without an overcoat, cloak, or hat in order to save the cloakroom fee. Of course, when we came out of the overheated standing stalls into the night, it was often bitterly cold. But what did that matter after a "Lohengrin" or a "Tristan"?

It was extremely unpleasant for both of us, however, that in order to avoid the "lock-out fee," we had to be in front of our house by ten o'clock at the latest. Since, according to Adolf's exact calculations, the way from the Court Opera on the Ring to the house at Stumpergasse 29 took fifteen minutes at the sharpest pace and observing all shortcuts, we had to leave the Opera a quarter of an hour before ten o'clock. Therefore, we positioned ourselves after the intermission already in front of the rear entrance and left our places in the "Kipfel" to other art-enthusiastic youths. The consequence of this was that Adolf never got to know the ending of operas that had a longer performance time. I then had to play these for him on the piano.

As always, our undivided love and enthusiasm belonged to the music dramas of Richard Wagner. Before this unique mystical world, which the great master conjured up for us, everything else receded far into the background for Adolf. Thus it could happen, for example, that although a magnificent Verdi performance was scheduled at the Court Opera, which I wanted to attend, he would press me for so long until I finally gave up my Verdi and ran out with him to Währing to hear Wagner at the Volksoper. To him, a mediocre Wagner was still a hundred times preferable to a first-class Verdi. I was, of course, of a different opinion. But what was the use? I had to give in, as so often. When it came to a Wagner performance, there was no contradiction for Adolf. Certainly, he had already heard the opera in question at the time—I no longer know whether it was "Lohengrin" or "Tristan"—at the Court Opera, and thus in a much better presentation. But that was not at all decisive. Hearing Wagner was not what one called a visit to the theater for him, but rather a possibility to transport himself into that extraordinary state into which he fell when listening to the music of Richard Wagner, into that self-forgetfulness, that drifting away into a mystical dreamland, which he needed to endure the enormous tensions of his eruptive nature.

The ensemble and orchestra of the Volksoper were at a considerable level and naturally still far exceeded the standard we were accustomed to from Linz, for example. The director at the time, Rainer Simons, even occasionally made guest appearances with his ensemble at the Court Opera. A further advantage was that at the Volksoper on the Währinger Gürtel, one could obtain a seat for little money and without standing at the box office for a long time. What alienated us there was the sober "New Objectivity" style of the building, the unimaginative, bleak decor of the house, which was matched by an equally empty and sober production. Adolf always called this theater the "soup kitchen."

We brought the necessary prerequisites from our joint theater visits in Linz to be able to enjoy the work of the immortal master in Vienna with increased interest. We knew his works thoroughly, but on the other hand, we were by no means spoiled regarding the performance, so that in the Court Opera, but even also in the more modest Währinger theater, we had the impression that the world of Richard Wagner was being gifted to us anew.

It was now worth our while that we had concerned ourselves so thoroughly with the work of the Bayreuth Master. We had already seen some of his operas in Linz; "Lohengrin" — still Adolf's favorite opera, I believe he must have seen it in Vienna at least ten times during our time together! — we naturally knew by heart, as well as the "Meistersinger." Just as others quote from their Goethe or Schiller, so we invoked Wagner. We were particularly fond of quoting from the "Meistersinger." We knew, of course, that Wagner intended to set a monument to his brilliant friend Franz Liszt with the figure of Hans Sachs, while with Beckmesser he went after his bitter opponent Hanslick. How often did Adolf quote the verse from the third scene of the second act:

"And yet, it just won't go.
I feel it and cannot understand it.
Cannot retain it, yet cannot forget it,
And if I grasp it whole, I cannot measure it."

For my friend, this was the unique, eternally valid formula with which Richard Wagner had lashed out at the lack of understanding of his contemporaries and which now stood, so to speak, as a motto over his own fate; for his father, relatives, teachers, and professors had indeed "felt" that there was something special about him, but by God, they could "not understand" it. And when people finally grasped what he was about, they remained unable to "measure" his will. Like a daily reminder, a never-failing consolation, these lines stood before him, as omnipresent as the image of the great Master himself, by which he sustained himself in dark hours.

But we had also studied thoroughly, using the libretto and score, those operatic works of Wagner that had not been performed in Linz. Thus, Wagnerian Vienna found us well prepared, and it went without saying that we immediately joined the ranks of his followers and, wherever possible, stood up for the work of the Bayreuth Master with glowing zeal.

The impressions at the Linz Landestheater, which for us at that time were the pinnacles of artistic experience, receded into the modesty of provincial performances in the face of the perfect interpretation of Wagner's music dramas by the Vienna Court Opera directed by Gustav Mahler, where good intentions had to replace deficient skill. But Adolf would not have been Adolf if he had been content in this case with a regretful reminiscence. He loved Linz, which he continued to refer to as his home, even though he had lost his parents and in...

only a single person lived in this city to whom he was attached with passionate devotion — Stefanie, who still did not know what she meant to that pale youth who had stood day after day at the corner of the Schmiedtor and waited for her. The artistic life of the city of Linz had to be brought to a level that somewhat corresponded to the level of Vienna. With wild determination, Adolf set to work.

Upon leaving Linz at the time, he had placed great hopes in the Theater Building Association, of which he had become an enthusiastic member. But these brave men, who had come together to give Linz a new, worthy theater, apparently made little progress. Nothing was seen, nothing was heard. Adolf's impatience grew and grew. So he set to work himself. It gave him pleasure to apply that representative style of building, which he had learned in imperial Vienna, to his hometown.

He had long since removed the railway station with its ugly workshops, the soot-covered boiler houses, and the space-consuming track systems from the cityscape and moved them to the Wels Heath or to the area in front of the Kleinmünchen railway station. This made it possible to expand the Volksgarten, which was to receive a zoo, a palm house, and, of course, a luminous fountain. In the midst of this well-tended park, the new Linz Opera House was to rise, smaller in dimensions than the Vienna Court Opera, but equal in technical equipment. The old provincial theater was to become a playhouse. Opera and theater had to be placed under a single management. Of the designs that Adolf made of the new Linz Opera House at that time, to my joy, that previously mentioned sketch has been preserved, which shows the design of the auditorium on the front and indicates the acoustic conditions on the back—a sketch which, in its unerring manner, also proves how much Adolf's graphic creative ability had already increased through his stay in Vienna.

But that was not enough. Linz was also to receive a worthy concert building. Adolf designed a concert hall (Tonhalle), of which unfortunately no drawing has survived. I only remember that this Tonhalle, conceived as a massive circular building, was originally intended to be built on the square in front of the Jägermayer Forest, exactly where a restaurant was later built. But he then abandoned this plan and decided to place the Tonhalle likewise in the enlarged city park in order to establish a close connection with the city.

In this way, my friend overcame the desolate conditions in his hometown.

With all the greater pleasure he could devote himself to the artistic impressions of Vienna.

At that time, we saw almost all the works of Richard Wagner. Unforgettable to me have remained "The Flying Dutchman," "Lohengrin," "Tannhäuser," "Tristan and Isolde," "The Mastersingers of Nuremberg," as well as the performance of the "Ring" and even "Parsifal."

Of course, Adolf also occasionally visited other operas. But they did not give him nearly as much as Wagner's works. In Linz, we had already experienced an astonishingly good "Figaro," which Auderieth had conducted at the time — Auderieth later went to the Volksoper in Vienna — and which had sent Adolf into sheer delight. I still remember how he said on the way home that the Linz theater should in the future concentrate only on operas that it could easily master, like this "Figaro." On the other hand, the "Magic Flute" was unfortunately a failure in terms of staging, and Weber's "Freischütz" was so bad that Adolf never wanted to see this opera again. In Vienna, this was naturally different. Not only Mozart's operas, but also Beethoven's "Fidelio" we saw in perfected form. Although the Italian masters such as Donizetti, Rossini, Bellini, and above all Verdi, as well as Puccini, who seemed quite modern at the time, were highly esteemed in Vienna and experienced sold-out houses, Adolf could not warm to Italian opera. Together we saw Giuseppe Verdi's "Un ballo in maschera," "Il trovatore," "Rigoletto," and "La traviata," but "Aida" appealed to him most of all. The plots of Italian operas were too much geared toward the sensational, toward the grand entrance for him. He rejected the treacherous, the devious, and the hypocritical as motives for a drama. Once he said to me: "What would these Italians do if they didn't have a dagger?" Verdi's music was, in a certain sense, too undemanding for him, too one-sidedly focused on melody. How rich and diverse, by contrast, was the sound-world of Richard Wagner! When we once heard a barrel-organ grinder on the Wienzeile organing out "La donna è mobile" on his hurdy-gurdy, Adolf said: "There you have your Verdi now!" When I interjected that no composer would be safe from this profanation of his work, he snapped at me angrily: "Can you perhaps imagine the Grail Narration on a hurdy-gurdy?" Neither Gounod, whose "Margarete" he described as kitschy, nor Tchaikovsky or Smetana could make an impression on him. In this regard, his one-sided attitude toward the world of German legends undoubtedly stood in his way. My thesis that music must address all peoples and nations, he rejected. For him, only the German way, the German essence, the German mind counted. He only accepted the German masters. How often he said to me that he was proud to belong to a people that had produced such masters. What the others mattered to him. Because he did not want to acknowledge them, he also convinced himself that he did not like their music. We often clashed harshly on this point.

But time and again we found common ground in Richard Wagner. In the course of my professional musical training, I had gained new, essential insights into the Master's compositional work. With this, my understanding and my appreciation of his music grew. Adolf took a lively interest in this development of my musical perception. His devotion and veneration for Wagner took on the form of a religious ecstasy.

When Adolf heard Wagner's music, he was like a changed man. Then all violence fell away from him; he became still, docile, manageable. The restlessness vanished from his gaze. What moved him during the day sank into nothingness. His own fate, however heavily it weighed upon him, was extinguished. He no longer felt like an outcast from human society, misunderstood and lonely. It came over him like an intoxication, an ecstasy. Willingly, he allowed himself to be carried up into that mythical world, which for him was much more real than the actual world of the day. From the dull, musty dungeon of the rear building, he was transported into the blessed realms of the Germanic past, into that world which was ideal for him and which hovered before him as the ultimate goal of his endeavors.

When he saw me again thirty years later in Linz—his friend whom he had left as a student of the Vienna Conservatory—he was convinced he would find a capable conductor. When I then stood before him as a modest municipal official, he, who had now become Chancellor of the Reich, aimed for me to take over an orchestra.

I declined with thanks. I no longer felt up to this task. When he realized that his friend could not be helped with this generous offer, he remembered our shared youthful experiences at the Linz Landestheater and the Vienna Court Opera, which had lifted our friendship out of the everyday into the consecrated spheres of his world, and he invited me to come to Bayreuth.

I would not have thought that those extraordinary artistic experiences during my student days in Vienna were still capable of being surpassed. And yet it was so, for what I was able to experience in Bayreuth as a guest of my former childhood friend represents the crowning achievement of what Richard Wagner has meant in my life.

ADOLF COMPOSES AN OPERA

Our life together in Vienna soon showed its downside through the various studies that Adolf and I pursued. In the mornings, while I was at the Academy, my friend was still sleeping; in the afternoons, when Adolf wanted to work, I disturbed him with my musical exercises. This frequently led to friction.

Conservatory this, conservatory that! What did he have his books for? He wanted to prove to me that even without attending the conservatory, he could achieve the same, even more, musically than I could, for it was not the wisdom of the professor that mattered, but the brilliant idea.

This endeavor led him to a most peculiar experiment, the value or worthlessness of which I am as undecided about today as I was then. Adolf reached back to the most elementary possibilities of musical expression. Even the word seemed to him too complicated a structure for this. He considered in what form individual sounds could be combined with specific tones—that is, musical utterances. To this tonal language, stammered in an almost ecstatic form, he added—specific colors. The sounding tone and the luminous color were to become a unity and provide the basis for what appeared in perfected form as the stage design of the opera. I myself, filled with the dogmatic reliability of everything I learned at the conservatory, rejected these attempts somewhat haughtily, which annoyed him greatly. He occupied himself for a long time with these thoroughly abstract experiments, perhaps because he had hoped to unhinge my arrogant seminar-wisdom with them. I remembered my friend's compositional attempts again a few years later when a Russian composer in Vienna caused quite a stir with similar color-tone experiments.

In those weeks, Adolf wrote a great deal, especially plays, but also novellas. He sat at the table and worked until morning, without revealing too much to me of what occupied him. Only now and then would he throw a few sheets, closely written from top to bottom, onto my bed or read me a few pages of the poetry, which was written in a strangely exaggerated language.

I knew that almost everything he wrote was rooted in Richard Wagner, and thus in the world of Germanic lore. Then one time, without thinking anything special of it, I made a remark that one, as

I had learned in the lectures on music history that among Wagner's posthumous writings, a draft for a music drama about "Wieland the Smith" had also been found. However, it was only a cursorily sketched short text. There were no drafts for a stage production. Furthermore, nothing was known about any musical setting of the material.

Adolf immediately looked up the Wieland saga in his book "Gods and Heroes" and read it through. Curiously, my friend was not at all bothered by the motives of the action in the Wieland saga, even though King Nidur was guided only by possession and greed during his raid. Even the inclination towards gold, which is very significant in Germanic mythology and heroic sagas, did not lead him to either a negative or a positive stance. The fact that Wieland kills his sons out of revenge, rapes his daughter, and drinks from cups made from the heads of the sons did not impress him either. That same night, he began to write. I was convinced that in the morning he would surprise me with the draft of a new play, "Wieland the Smith."

But things turned out differently. In the morning, I learned nothing at all. But when I came home at noon, Adolf was sitting at the grand piano, quite contrary to the agreement we had established. The following scene has remained clearly in my memory.

Without any further explanation, he received me with the words: "Hey, Gustl, I'm making an opera out of 'Wieland'!"

I was so surprised that I couldn't give any answer at all. Adolf relished my shock and continued to play on the piano, which for him was simply what he called "playing." Well, he had learned a few things back then from good old Prewratzky. But that was not enough to "play the piano" as I understood it.

When I had recovered, I asked Adolf how he imagined that would work.

"Quite simple: I compose, and you write it down."

Adolf had always moved more or less outside of conventional ideas with his plans, projects, and thoughts. I had long since grown used to that. But since it now concerned my very own specialty, music, I couldn't quite follow anymore. Despite all recognition of his musical talent, he was not a musician, not even an instrumentalist. He had no idea about music theory at all. How did he intend to compose an opera?

I only know that I felt somewhat offended in my sensibilities as a student of the conservatory and, without many words, again...

left. In a small neighboring cafe, I then wrote down my term paper.

Apparently, however, my behavior had in no way wounded my friend's self-confidence, for when I came home after the evening score-playing, Adolf explained, in a somewhat calmer mood:

"Hey, the prelude is finished, listen to it!"

Then he played, without sheet music, by heart on the grand piano, what he had envisioned as the prelude to his opera.

Naturally, I no longer know a single note of this music. One thing, however, remained stuck in my memory. It was a kind of background accompaniment to the spoken word with natural musical elements, for which he also intended to use ancient instruments. Because this would sound completely unharmonious, my friend decided to bring in a modern symphony orchestra, reinforced by Wagner tubas, for the purpose. In any case, it was music that had substance. The individual musical thoughts had content and meaning. Perhaps the whole thing only seemed so primitive because Adolf could not play any better—that is, he could not express his thoughts more clearly. The composition was, as could hardly be otherwise, completely influenced by the tonal world of Wagner. The entire prelude consisted of a stringing together of individual themes. With the themes themselves, as well-conceived as they were in their own right, Adolf had not known how to do anything proper. Where was he supposed to get this knowledge from? He lacked any of the necessary tools for it.

When Adolf had finished playing, he asked me anxiously for my judgment. I had experienced often enough how much he valued it and what a word of praise from me meant in musical matters. But this matter was not to be dismissed so easily.

The basic musical themes sounded very good, I replied, but he must realize that it was impossible to write an opera with these themes alone. I declared myself ready to teach him the necessary theoretical tools.

Then he became angry.

"I'm not crazy," he shouted at me, "what do I have you for? For now, you will put exactly to paper what I play for you on the grand piano."

I knew this tone of my friend's very well and knew that I could not allow myself any contradiction now. So I wrote down, as well as I could, what Adolf had played on the piano. But it was already late in the evening. Frau Zakreys was already knocking impatiently on the wall. Adolf had to stop playing the piano.

The next morning I left very early. I had a seminar for to attend counterpoint and theory of form. When I came home at noon, Adolf reproached me, saying that I had run away "in the middle of the work on his opera." He already had the manuscript paper ready for me and immediately began to play again. Since Adolf adhered neither to a specific beat nor to a uniform key, it was difficult to write down what I heard. I first tried to make him understand that he had to stick to a specific time signature. Then he shouted at me:

"Am I the composer or are you?"

My task, he said, consisted merely of putting his musical thoughts and ideas onto paper.

I asked him to start from the beginning again. He did so, and I wrote down the notes. In this way, we at least made good progress. But for Adolf, it was going much too slowly. I told him that for the time being, I wanted to play through what had been written down so far myself. He agreed to this. Now I went to the grand piano, and he had to listen.

Strangely enough, I liked what I played better than he did, presumably because he carried a very specific musical vision of this composition in his head, which corresponded neither with his inadequate playing nor with my transcription and my playing.

Nevertheless, we worked for several days, or rather nights, only on this overture. I had to bring the whole thing into a usable metrical form. But however I carried it out, Adolf showed himself dissatisfied. In the course of his compositions, periods occurred where the meter simply changed from bar line to bar line. I succeeded in convincing Adolf that this would be intolerable. But as soon as I tried to bring the sequence in question into a uniform time signature, it was not right for him again.

Today I understand what brought him to the brink of despair in those worked-through nights and put a heavy strain on our friendship. He already carried this overture within him as a complete, closed composition, just as he carried the design for a bridge or a concert hall within him even before he reached for the drawing pencil. But while the pencil obeyed him willingly, so that he could give immediate shape to the idea until finally the drawing lay finished before him, this mediation failed in the musical field. The attempt to involve me in the process made the whole matter even more complicated, for my school-taught knowledge stood in the way of his intuition. To have an idea in one's head, a musical idea that seemed to him as bold as it was significant, and yet to be unable to hold onto it, could drive him to sheer despair. These were the moments in which, despite his so clearly marked self-confidence, he became uncertain of his calling.

But it was not long before he had found a way to escape the disastrous contrast between passionate will and insufficient ability. This path was as ingenious as it was original: he intended to compose his opera, he explained to me decisively, in such a way that it would correspond to the musical possibilities of expression of the time in which the action took place—that is, the early period of Germanic history. I wanted to object that with this type of musical setting, the listeners, in order to properly "enjoy" his opera, would also have to be early Germans, not people of the twentieth century. But I could hardly get my objection past my lips before he was already pursuing this new solution with fiery zeal. I never even got the chance to talk him out of this attempt, which in my opinion was musically impossible. Furthermore, he probably would have convinced me of the feasibility of this solution anyway by proving to me that the people of our century first had to learn how to hear properly again...

He wanted to know what had been preserved of the music of the Germanic peoples.

"Nothing," I replied briefly, "except for the instruments."

"And they are?"

I told him that drums and rattles had been found. At individual excavation sites in Sweden and Denmark, flute-like instruments made of bone had also been discovered. Researchers had succeeded in reconstructing these strange flutes and even producing individual, though not very musical-sounding, tones on them. However, the greatest significance was attributed to the lurs. These were wind instruments made of bronze, about two meters long and curved like horns. The lurs probably served merely as signal horns for communication from farm to farm. Their harsh, trombone-like tone could hardly be described as music anymore.

I thought my explanations, which he had followed with earnest attention, would be enough to dissuade him from his plan, for an opera could not be orchestrated with rattles, drums, bone flutes, and lurs. But I was mistaken. He began to speak of the skalds who had accompanied their songs. With what? With harp-like instruments, I had to admit. I had truly forgotten about that.

It must be possible, he continued, to draw conclusions about the nature of their music from the instruments used by the Germanic tribes. Now my school knowledge came back into full play.

"That has been done," I reported, "and it has been proven that the music of the Germanic peoples, in contrast to the purely linear music of the Mediterranean peoples, was structured vertically—that is, chordally. In this vertical structure, there was presumably already a kind of harmony, perhaps even already"

...intuitive precursors for major and minor. Of course, these are only scientific assumptions, so-called hypotheses...”

It took no more than that to move my friend to nights of composing. He surprised me with ever new ideas and concepts. It was hardly possible to write down this primordially felt music, which fit into no scheme. Since the legend of Wieland the Smith, which he moreover interpreted and expanded very arbitrarily, was rich in dramatic events, it required a rich scale of emotional stirrings that had to be translated into music. To achieve a somewhat “audible” impression, I had finally persuaded Adolf to forgo the use of original instruments originating from Germanic graves in the orchestra and to use modern instruments of a similar kind instead. I was satisfied when, in this way, after nights of work, the individual leitmotifs necessary for the setting of the opera were finally established.

Then we determined the characters, of whom so far only Wölund or, as he is called in the German heroic legend, Wieland, the hero of our opera, had gained clearer outlines. The entire plot was then divided by Adolf into acts and structured according to appearances and scenes. In between, he designed the scenario, drew the costumes, and sketched with a charcoal pencil the hero with his flight wings attached to his back.

Since my friend was making no progress with the text, which he wanted to compose in verse, I suggested to him that he finish the overture first. After several rather heated arguments, he agreed to it. I gave him a strong helping hand, so that the overture was truly something to be proud of. He asked me to write out the version written down in pencil in ink. This I did. But he energetically rejected my suggestion to orchestrate the composition and have it played by an orchestra at a suitable opportunity. He resisted having the overture classified as light music and also wanted to know nothing of a more than questionable “public.” And yet he worked on it so feverishly, as if an impatient opera director had set him a deadline much too close and were already about to tear the manuscript from his hands.

He wrote and wrote; I worked on the musical setting. When I, overcome by fatigue, fell asleep, I was rudely shaken awake by Adolf. Hardly had I opened my eyes when he stepped before me, manuscript in hand, and read to me in hasty words, tumbling over each other in excitement, what he had written. He had to speak softly, for midnight had already passed. The necessity to [keep] his vehement words...

to dampen, although the events he depicted in his verses took place with volcanic force, gave his passion-driven voice an unreal, alien sound. I had known this state in him for a long time, when a self-imposed task completely fulfilled him and forced him into restless activity. It broke over him like something demonic. He could then forget everything around him. He never grew tired; in such nights, there was no sleep for him. He ate nothing, he hardly drank anything. At most, he would occasionally reach for the milk bottle standing by the window and take a hasty gulp, certainly without knowing it, so much was he preoccupied by what had seized him. But never before had this ecstatic creation become so immediately clear to me. Where was this to lead? He was wasting his strength, his talents on tasks that yielded no practical benefit and could at least, as a sort of compensation, make life more bearable for him. How long could his already weakened body, highly susceptible to illness, endure this overexertion?

Yet I forced myself with violence to stay awake and listen. None of the questions that filled me with concern for him passed my lips. It would have been easy for me to use one of the frequent arguments as an excuse to move out. They would have willingly helped me at the conservatory to find another room. Why did I not do it? I had often admitted to myself that this strange friendship was not good for my studies. How much time, how much strength alone did these unnecessary nightly undertakings of my friend cost me? Why then did I not leave? Because I was homesick, certainly, I readily admitted that to myself, and because Adolf represented a piece of home for me. But ultimately, homesickness is a matter that a young man of twenty can get over. What was it then? What held me fast?

To be honest, it was precisely hours like the ones I was experiencing now that bound me even more firmly to my friend. I knew, after all, what usually moved young people of about my age: flirtations, shallow pleasures, idle dallying, and with it a wealth of trivial, meaningless thoughts. Adolf was the exact opposite of that. An unheard-of seriousness lay within him, a thoroughness, a true, passionate participation in all events and, in addition—what attracted me to him above all and brought him back into balance after hours in which he had completely spent himself—his absolute devotion to the beautiful, the sublime, the greatness of art. For that, I gladly accepted a few sleepless nights, as well as those more or less heated arguments to which I had already somewhat accustomed myself in my calm, sensible way.

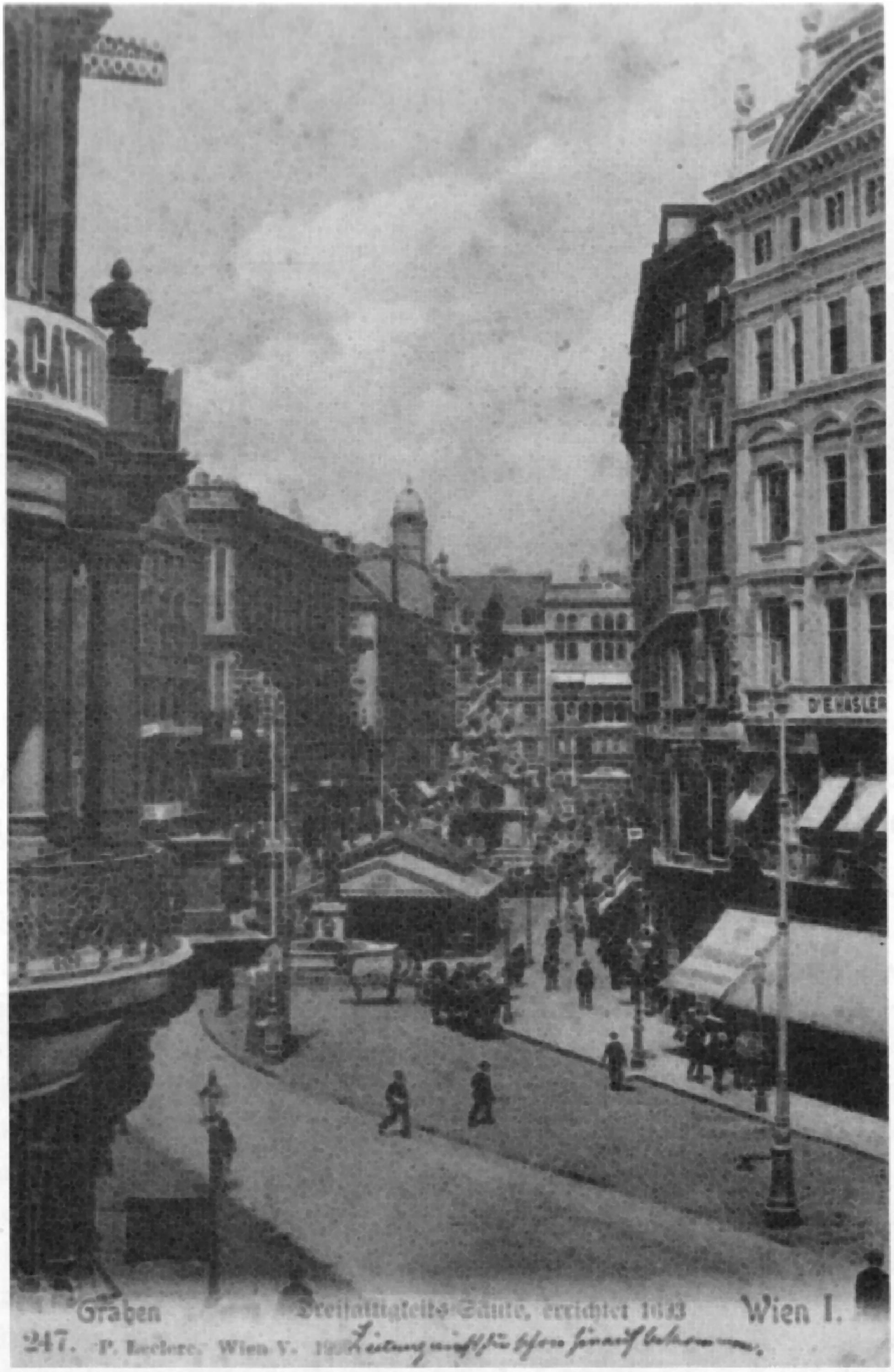
I still remember how individual drastic scenes of the opera haunted me for weeks, even into my dreams. Only individual images that Adolf had designed remained in my memory. Because working with pen and pencil was too slow for him, he drew with charcoal. The scenario was captured with quick, boldly dashed strokes. Then we considered the action that was to take place upon it: first Wieland from the right, then, coming from the left, his brother Egil, and stepping forward from the background, the second brother, Slaghid.

I can still see the Wolf Lake before me, where the first scene of the opera took place. From the Edda, a book that was sacred to him, he knew Iceland, the rugged northern island where the elements from which the world was created meet as directly as in the days of Creation. The fierce storm, the bare, dark rock, the bright ice of the glaciers, the blazing fire of the volcanoes. He moved the setting of his opera there, for there nature itself was still in that passionate movement that pulsed through the events among gods and men. There, then, lay the Wolf Lake, on whose shores Wieland fished with his brothers when, one morning, three bright clouds rose before the wind and floated toward the men. They were three Valkyries in gleaming mail and radiant helmets. They wore white, fluttering garments, magic shirts that made it possible for them to float through the air. I remembered what a headache these flying Valkyries caused us, which Adolf by no means wanted to do without. In our opera, as I noted, there was a lot of "flying" in general. Wieland himself also had to forge wings in the last act, with which he was then to rise into the air, a flight with metallic wings that, moreover, had to take place very easily, almost playfully, so as not to allow any doubts about the quality of his work to arise. For us, as the creators of this opera, it was one more technical problem that particularly attracted Adolf, perhaps because just at that time the first humans—Lilienthal, the Wright brothers, Farman, Blériot—had lifted themselves off the earth with apparatuses "heavier than air." The "flying Valkyries" wedded Wieland, Egil, and Slaghid. Mighty lures summoned the neighbors, and a wedding was held at the Wolf Lake.

It would lead too far if I were to describe the individual events based on the old legend, although various images of the scenario still stand before my eyes with great clarity. But today I no longer dare to say in detail whether we adhered to the wording of the legend in this or that scene or whether we deviated from it. But the overall impression of an event whipped forward by wild, unleashed passions, expressed through verses that...

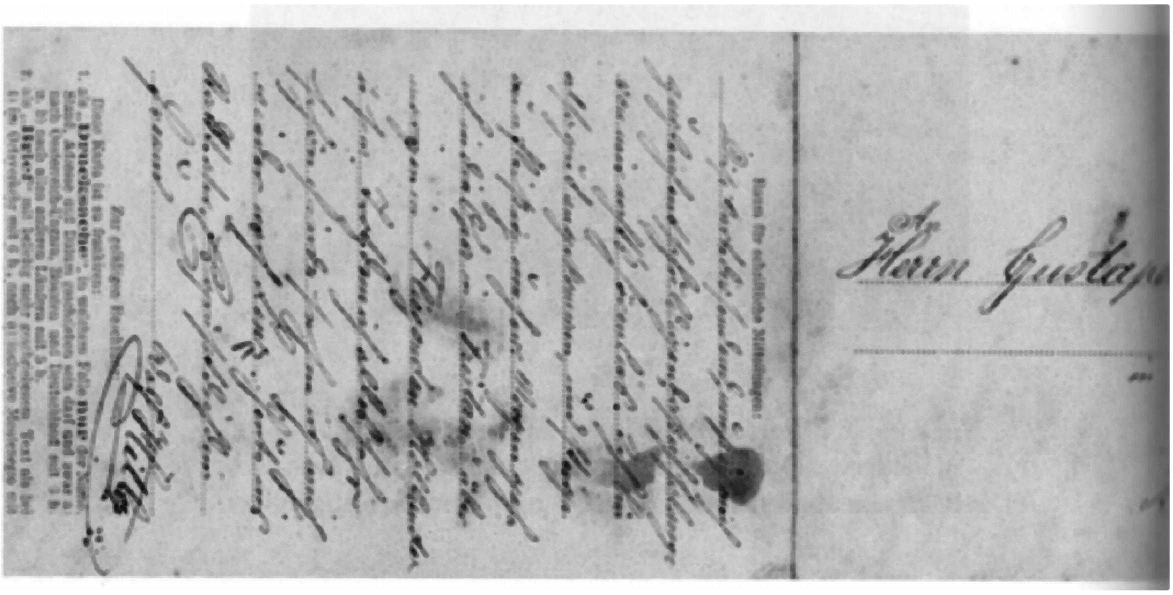
hammered relentlessly into the heart, carried by an equally relentlessly strict, primitive music, has remained vivid in my memory.

I do not know what happened to our opera after that. One day, new, urgent problems approached my friend that had to be solved immediately, and since Adolf, despite his immense capacity for work, had only two hands like the rest of us, he had to set aside the work on the opera, even though it was barely half finished. He spoke of it less and less frequently and then became completely silent. Perhaps the inadequacy of his efforts had also become clear to him in the meantime. I, however, had recognized from the beginning that we would not succeed with this operatic attempt, and I took care not to ask about it. "Wieland the Smith," Adolf's opera, remained a fragment.


Graben
Dreifaltigkeits-Säule, errichtet 1693
Wien I.
247. P. Leclerc, Wien V. 190
Zeitung nicht für schon hinauf bekommen.

**A postcard greeting from Hitler to the author,
after the latter had already returned to Linz.
The back of this card can be found pictured after page 270.**

A "triptych" (above), the first card the author received from Hitler from Vienna. A reference to the Music Conservatory is entered in his own hand. Furthermore, Hitler wanted to show his friend the magnificent buildings of the Ringstraße.



Herrn Gusta

THE "FLEXIBLE" REICH ORCHESTRA

My friend's musical interest experienced a gratifying expansion on Viennese soil. While he had previously only been interested in the opera, he now gained more and more interest in concerts. To be sure, Adolf had already attended the symphony concerts of the Music Society in Linz. In those years, he might have heard a total of perhaps six or seven concerts under the direction of August Göllerich. But his interest in them was less about what was presented in these concerts than about my person. I was already playing in the orchestra at that time, a circumstance that occupied Adolf greatly. Perhaps, given my quiet, yielding nature, he did not trust me at all with such a difficult task, which moreover had to be mastered in public, and from one time to the next he was anxious to see how it would turn out. In any case, I remember that after these performances he spoke more of me than of the concert itself.

That changed in Vienna. An external circumstance contributed to this. I received two or even three free tickets for concerts every week at the Conservatory. Adolf received one of these every time, often even both or all three, if I was prevented from coming along by the evening score-playing. Since these free tickets were consistently for good seats, the visit was also not as strenuous as in the Court Opera.

In the discussions that followed these concert performances, I noticed to my great surprise that Adolf was now also finding pleasure in symphonic music to an increasing degree. I was happy about this because it opened up a new common area of experience for us.

The head of the conducting school at the Conservatory, Gustav Gutheil, also conducted the performances of the Vienna Concert Society. However, we exceedingly esteemed Ferdinand Loewe, the director of the Conservatory, who occasionally also took the Vienna Philharmonic under his baton and in doing so stood up for Bruckner. Viennese musical life at that time was still entirely characterized by the fierce dispute between Brahms and Bruckner, although both masters had already been dead for over a decade. Eduard Hanslick, the dreaded Viennese music critic, whom we only called the "Beckmesser," was also already dead by then. But his disastrous influence was still clearly enough to be felt. Hanslick, who was our sworn enemy for the very reason that he had turned against Richard Wagner in the most violent form and sometimes with little objective or decent means, had very decisively intervened for Brahms and had furiously fought Anton Bruckner. On the other hand, Bruckner found a brilliant pioneer in Ferdinand Loewe. Franz Schalk, the later director of the Vienna Opera, also stood up for Bruckner.

It was not difficult for both of us to take a stand in this bitter dispute. I loved Bruckner very much, and Adolf, too, was gripped and moved by his symphonies. Moreover, Bruckner was our countryman. With his work, we were also defending a piece of home. However, that was no reason for us to reject Brahms. In this dispute, we felt ourselves to be representatives of the young generation, paid our respects to both masters, and smiled at what we considered the completely superfluous zeal of the elders. Adolf, however, did even more. Just as Richard Wagner, he believed, had made Bayreuth the site of his most impressive work, Linz should take up the cause of Anton Bruckner's work. The Linz Tonhalle, the design of which he had just completed, should be dedicated to his memory.

In addition to the great symphonies of the classical masters, Adolf also preferred to listen to the music of the Romantics, Carl Maria von Weber, Franz Schubert, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, and Robert Schumann. He deeply regretted that Richard Wagner had worked only for the stage and not with equal productivity for the concert hall, so that one mostly only got to hear the preludes to individual operas of his music.

I must not forget Edvard Grieg, whom Adolf loved especially and whose Piano Concerto in A minor delighted him anew every time.

In general, however, Adolf had little time for instrumental virtuosity. But there were individual solo concerts that he never missed: Mozart's and Beethoven's piano and violin concertos, Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor [sic - source says A minor], and above all Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor, which carried him away to sheer enthusiasm.

But something about these frequent concert visits did not let Adolf rest. For a long time, I did not understand what it was. Any other young person would have found satisfaction in the performances. Not so my friend.

There he sat in his free seat in the concert hall, let Beethoven's glorious Violin Concerto in D major flow over him, and was happy and content. But when he counted the people in the hall who could hear this concert, there were about four or five hundred. What did this small number mean compared to the thousands who could not hear this concert? Surely there were not only among the students, but also among the craftsmen, many of the workers, who would be just as happy as he if they could sit in a free or at least easily affordable seat in the concert hall to listen to this immortal music. In this regard, one should not think of Vienna alone, for in Vienna it was still relatively easy for music enthusiasts to attend concerts. But outside of Vienna, the small places, the provincial towns! Oh, he had experienced in Linz how meager the provision of cultural events still was out there. That had to change. Concert attendance should no longer be the privilege of a few favored people. Even the system of free tickets did not help to overcome this, much as he personally profited from it. A remedy had to be created once and for all.

Such lines of thought were extremely typical for Adolf. Nothing could happen in his circle that was not immediately elevated by him into the general sphere. Even purely artistic experiences, which like concert visits move other people merely to passive reception, awakened in him active participation and became a problem that concerned everyone, for in the "ideal state" as he dreamed of it then, nothing could or should remain indifferent. The "storm of revolution" also had to tear wide open the gates of art, which until then had remained closed to so many. "Social reform" also in the field of artistic enjoyment!

Certainly, many young people in those years thought similarly to him. His protest against the favoring of certain social classes in artistic matters was by no means isolated, quite the contrary. At that time, there were not only fanatical champions of the idea of bringing art to the people, but also associations, organizations, and institutions that strove toward this goal with visible success. But unique was the form in which my friend wanted to remedy this grievance. While others contented themselves with modest means and were satisfied if they came closer to the goal step by step, Adolf leaped over the present with its well-intentioned but nonetheless inadequate means and strove for a total solution, regardless of when and where this could be realized. For him, it had already become reality at the moment he spoke the dominant idea for the first time.

And again typical for him: he did not content himself with simply putting this idea forward, but immediately began to work it out in all details, no differently than if he had received the commission for it from a "higher authority." This planning, which went into the smallest detail, replaced for him, to a certain extent, the actual realization. Once an idea had been thought through to its logical conclusion and organized by him down to the last detail, it required only a word of power to put it into action. This

A final word was, of course, never spoken during our friendship, a reason why I secretly considered Adolf a dreamer, even when he had completely convinced me of the "reasonableness" of his explanations. But even then, he firmly believed that he himself would one day speak this final word, through which the hundreds and thousands of different plans and projects, which were, so to speak, already at hand within him, could be executed and realized. However, he spoke of this only rarely and only to me, because he knew that I believed in him. I have experienced it often enough how, in such moments when a certain idea had taken possession of him, he worked his way through thorough and expert labor to the point where the other person listening had to ask: "Well and good, but who is to pay for it?" In Linz, I had often and often incautiously stumbled into this question because it simply lay in my path. After all, there was no point in remaining silent about the most important thing. In Vienna, I had already become somewhat more cautious and avoided asking too clearly about the costs or the money to be raised. The answers that Adolf gave to these questions, which seemed so unnecessary to him, also varied. In Linz, the blanket answer had been "The Reich!", an answer that, by my standards, was no answer at all. In Vienna, it was already somewhat more businesslike: "Financiers must be brought in!" But it also happened that I was harshly dismissed. "You will be the last person to be consulted about that," it was then said, "for you understand nothing of it anyway." Or even more briefly: "Kindly let that be my concern."

The first sign by which I noticed in each individual case that he was occupied with a certain idea was a peculiar word that appeared for the first time in his speeches or in our debate, a special expression that he had never used before. As long as he himself was not yet quite clear about what he intended with this idea, the respective designation with which he wanted to summarize his plan was also modified accordingly. Thus, in the weeks of his frequent concert visits, it was at first only "this orchestra that tours the provinces." I thought there really was such an orchestra in Vienna, and that Adolf was speaking of an actually existing institution. But then I discovered that this "mobile orchestra," as he now called it because the expression "touring" sounded too much like a cheap traveling show to him, existed only in his imagination. Since he was never satisfied with half-measures, it soon became a "mobile Reich orchestra." I remember exactly that at the conclusion of our jointly conducted planning, Adolf was so enthusiastic about this institution he had created that he planned to gradually set up ten such orchestras and send them on tours, in order to also...

to delight even the last, most forgotten corners of the Reich with Beethoven's Violin Concerto in D Major and similar unique creations.

When he began to speak in detail about this orchestra for the first time one evening in his usual insistent manner, I asked him in astonishment why musical institutions of all things would occupy him so much. Didn't he actually want to become a master builder? The answer was short and succinct: "Because I have you with me at the moment." By this he meant to say that as long as I was with him, it would be possible for him at any time to seek my advice and knowledge as a future conductor. This naturally flattered me. But when I then ventured a bit further and, full of expectation, asked him whom he intended to entrust with the leadership of this orchestra, he saw through me immediately, laughed sarcastically, and shouted: "Certainly not you!" But then, becoming serious again, he added that he would indeed consider my appointment as conductor of the "Mobile Reich Orchestra" if the occasion arose. But I felt offended and replied to him that I would waive this honor, for my concern was to become a conductor in an actually existing orchestra and not merely in his more than questionable dream orchestra. That was enough to trigger a fit of rage in him. He could never endure anyone doubting the realization of his ideas. "You'll be glad yet if I put you in such a post!" he bellowed at me.

After this temperamental overture, the "performance" itself could begin. I have kept all the details about our "Mobile Reich Orchestra" much more clearly in my memory than many other plans with which Adolf's head was filled, because in this case it concerned my very own field of expertise. Naturally, I was therefore allowed much more of a say this time than usual, even more than during his attempt to supplement Richard Wagner's music dramas with a new opera, "Wieland the Smith." How thoroughly we approached our task can be seen from the fact that on one of the following evenings we clashed over the pedal harp. Certainly, the "Mobile Reich Orchestra" needed a pedal harp. But Adolf wanted to employ three of these precious and, moreover, difficult-to-transport instruments right away. "What for?" I interjected, "an experienced conductor will get by with a single pedal harp." — "Ridiculous," Adolf threw in angrily, "how do you expect to play the 'Magic Fire Music' if you only have a single pedal harp in the orchestra?" — "Then the 'Magic Fire Music' simply won't be on the program!" I replied. "Oh, it will be on the program," Adolf insisted. I made one last attempt to reach a sensible solution.

"Consider that a pedal harp costs eighteen thousand guilders." That surely had to dissuade him from his stubbornly defended position. But I had been mistaken. "Oh, what of it, money!" he exclaimed. With that, the matter was decided. The "mobile Reich orchestra" was equipped with three pedal harps.

When I think back on the fiery zeal with which we argued about things that existed only in our imagination, I have to smile about it today. And yet! What a glorious time it was, in which we became more excited about vague wishful thinking than about the reality of everyday life, and worked ourselves up with hot heads and overflowing hearts into an imaginary world in which we were no longer poor, starving students, but great, significant personalities. I marveled at the uncanny power of imagination with which my friend found his way around this dream world, much better than in the real world that surrounded him. But of course, I did not suspect that what for me was only an idle play of fantasy or romantic enthusiasm meant much more to him.

The idea underlying this "mobile Reich orchestra" was immediately clear to me; indeed, I myself had often thought about these facts. Large orchestras that achieve perfection can only exist in large cities, such as Vienna, Berlin, Munich, Amsterdam, Milan, New York, for only there is it possible to select first-class instrumentalists from the vast number of practicing musicians. The consequence of this is that only the inhabitants of the big city can participate directly in the performances of these orchestras. However, enthusiasm for beauty and receptivity to perfectly rendered music also exist among the people of the countryside, the small and medium-sized towns; often the artistic readiness of these people is even greater than that of the frequently distracted, rushed big-city dwellers, who have been dulled by the overabundance of impressions.

The solution that Adolf had devised was as ingenious as it was simple: Under the direction of a gifted conductor, an orchestra is built up that is capable of rendering classical, romantic, and modern works of symphonic music in perfect form. This orchestra is then sent across the country according to a very specific plan. Adolf asked me how large I thought this orchestra should be. The mere fact that he sought advice from me, and not from his books, filled me with pride. Furthermore, I felt addressed as a future conductor. I was truly in my element. I can still see in my memory how we built up this orchestra on the grand piano—the table was too small for it—the strings, the woodwinds, the brass, the percussion; how Adolf wanted to be informed about every minor detail, how he...

instructed on the peculiarities and special features of the instrumentation of symphonic works, so as not to overlook anything and to make the orchestra perfect in every respect. This was the mysterious, the strange thing about him, this inexplicable contrast to me: to fantasize into thin air and at the same time to make a matter rock-solid down to the last detail. As certain as the whole plan remained only wish and will, the individual parts had to be presented concretely. Half the night passed until we had worked our way through.

The orchestra we had built up eventually consisted of one hundred men, a respectable body of sound that could easily take up the competition with other large orchestras. The next question was the equipment. Adolf was somewhat astonished at what I listed for him there, not only first-class instruments, whose careful transport had to be guaranteed — it was best to take out a flat-rate insurance policy for this — but a rich, always clearly maintained music archive, and beyond that, stands, chairs, etc. But he saw that a first-class cellist could not sit on a different chair every evening. Finally, he requested that I obtain even more precise information about these acquisitions from the secretary of the orchestral association, inquire at the musicians' union about the engagement of the instrumentalists, and then work out a cost estimate. For me, a somewhat strange assignment. My friend, who actually wants to become a master builder, sends me, who actually wanted to become a conductor, to the orchestral association to gather information for him! Adolf was satisfied with what I conveyed to him. He dismissed the high sum of the cost estimate with a disparaging wave of the hand. I still remember how we got worked up about the uniform clothing of the orchestra members. Of course, the orchestra also had to offer a pleasing sight to the eye. I suggested a discreet uniform. Adolf was against it. We decided on uniform dark and elegant, but not conspicuous clothing.

A difficult problem remained the transport of the orchestra, for there were areas that were difficult to reach by rail. And it was precisely these that mattered to us. But these new-fashioned automobiles were running around in the streets. People still stood still back then and looked after these vehicles, which raced across the Ring, noisy and stinking, at a "murderous" speed of fifteen kilometers per hour. How would it be to load our Reich Orchestra onto such vehicles? Without a doubt, this would enormously increase the mobility of the orchestra and thus also the possibilities of its deployment. I no longer know exactly today how far we extended this thought back then, which was inherently unsympathetic to me because I could not imagine that an orchestra that with such hellish noise had come roaring in, which was supposed to make people receptive to finer, more differentiated acoustic impressions.

Good! The orchestra arrives, is solemnly greeted by the mayor, and is guided through the festively decorated town. First question: where should it perform? Only a few cities possess a room that can accommodate an orchestra of one hundred men and a multiple of that in listeners. "We will play outdoors," Adolf said. "Concerts under the starry sky are very atmospheric in themselves," I interjected, "only the starry sky must remain guaranteed for the duration of the performance." Apart from that, it would become more a concert for the stars than for the people, because the acoustics would be lost in the open air. The whole plan almost failed because of these hard facts. Adolf was silent for a while and reflected. Then he said: "Churches are everywhere. Why don't we play in the churches?" From a musical standpoint, there was nothing to be said against it. Adolf thought I should inquire with the church authorities whether the church spaces would be made available for the musical performances of the "mobile Reich orchestra." However, I did not want to go along with the game that far. But I remained silent about it, and Adolf forgot to ask me about the result of these inquiries.

Severe differences arose regarding the design of the program. Adolf wanted to know how long an orchestra needed to rehearse a symphony until it was ready for performance. He was already annoyed by the fact that there was no reliable norm for this. In no case, however, would he accept my view that the orchestral musical repertoire—if he really wanted to limit it to German composers, a standpoint he stubbornly defended—only began with Bach, Fux, Gluck, and Handel, or at most with individual works by Heinrich Schütz. "And what was before that?" he demanded to know. "Nothing that would be considered for an orchestral program," I replied. "Who says that?" he shouted at me. I calmly explained to him that he could rely fully and entirely on my information in this case, unless he wanted to study music history himself. "I will do that too!" he shot back angrily. With that, he concluded the discussion on the design of the program.

I did not take his words seriously, for studying music history was by no means easy. Furthermore, this subject led far away from his professional interests. And besides, he knew that I was truly knowledgeable in this field, since I had heard lectures on it at the university. I was all the more astonished when, the next day, he sat over a thick tome: "The Development of Music through the Changing Ages." For a few days, he was not available to speak to me. The work satisfied him, however not complete. He had me give him the music history lecture notes by Dr. Guido Adler and Dr. Max Dietz and worked through them with fiery zeal.

"The Chinese were already making good music two thousand years ago," he declared, "why should it have been any different with us? After all, a certain instrument was already present even then: the human voice. Just because these learned gentlemen are groping in the dark regarding the beginnings of music—that is to say, they know nothing about it—it by no means implies that there really was nothing."

All respect for the thoroughness with which my friend always went to work! But at times, his obsession with getting to the bottom of everything he encountered could drive me to despair. He would not rest until, despite his best efforts, he could go back no further and stood clearly before a void. And even before this void, he still placed a large question mark. I could well imagine that with this temperament, he would have driven all the professors at the Academy out of their minds.

In any case, it was now settled that we would begin the program of the "Mobile Reich Orchestra" with Johann Sebastian Bach, leading through Gluck and Handel to Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Then came the Romantics, but the crowning glory of the whole thing was the work of Anton Bruckner, whose complete symphonies were included in the program. As for the modern, especially the still young, unknown composers, Adolf wanted to go his own way entirely in the selection of their works. In any case, he completely rejected the principles established by the Viennese music critics, just as he attacked the "guild members," the "mere professionals," and the "specialists" at every available opportunity.

Since the days when we set the "Mobile Reich Orchestra" on its feet, Adolf started a special notebook, which I can remember clearly. It was a small booklet, easily slipped into a pocket, in which he entered the title of the work, the name of the composer, and the conductor after every concert he experienced, noting his own judgment alongside. In the future, during our concert visits, it was considered the highest praise he could bestow upon a work when he said: "Will be included in the program of our orchestra."

The thought of the "Mobile Reich Orchestra" did not let go of me for a long time. Although gramophones already existed back then, they were still miserably croaking monsters; however, the path to "mechanical" music had already been opened. Wireless telegraphy was still in its...

at that time still in its infancy. It was only in the following year that the Italian Marconi received the Nobel Prize, which made his invention world-famous. Even though the record and radio have since embarked on an unparalleled triumphal march, so that it almost looks as if "played" music were only needed for the production of "mechanical" music, the fundamental question that my friend tackled with such determination and sought to solve with the help of the "Mobile Reich Orchestra" still remains today for all insightful and truly art-loving people: to bring valuable music in perfect reproduction directly—that is, not by mechanical means—to people who are receptive to it, regardless of where these people live.

UNPLEASANT INTERRUPTION

One fine day — it must have been at the beginning of April 1908 — a letter arrived for me. Since Adolf never received any mail, I was in the habit of not making a fuss about letters intended for me in front of him, so as not to let him feel his hard personal fate. But he noticed immediately that there must be something special about this letter. "What's going on, Gustl?" he asked sympathetically.

I merely replied: "Here, read it!"

I can still see how his face changed color, how his eyes took on that unusual glint that used to precede an outburst of anger. Then it broke out of him abruptly:

"Under no circumstances must you report, Gustl," he shouted. "You are a fool if you report. It is best if you tear up this stupid scrap of paper."

I jumped up and was just able to snatch the induction order, which my parents had forwarded to me, from his fingers before he could shred the document in his immoderate rage.

I was so taken aback myself that Adolf soon calmed down. Pacing vehemently back and forth between the door and the grand piano, he immediately devised his plan, which was intended to help me out of my current predicament.

"It isn't even certain yet whether you are fit at all," he explained more calmly. "After all, a year ago you only just barely survived that severe pneumonia. If you are unfit, which I hope, all the excitement will have been for nothing."

Adolf therefore suggested that I travel to Linz and have myself mustered according to regulations. If, however, I were found fit, I should immediately cross the border secretly near Passau and report to the German army out there "in the Reich." Under no circumstances should I serve in the Austro-Hungarian Army. He would not grant this declining Habsburg state a single soldier more. Since my friend was nine months younger than I, he was not to expect his induction order until the following year, 1909. But as I saw now, he had already formed definite thoughts about his future actions in this regard, never under any circumstances to serve in the Austro-Hungarian Army. Perhaps it was not at all unwelcome to him to first...

to test in my case how the solution he proposed would prove itself in practice.

The next morning I went to the Director of the Conservatory and showed him the induction notice. He explained to me that by entering the Conservatory I had acquired the right to serve as a one-year volunteer, but he advised me, as the only son of a businessman, to report for the replacement reserve. There I would only have to undergo an eight-week training course and subsequently complete three weapon exercises of four weeks each. I asked him what he thought of the idea of going to Germany and evading military service entirely. He was startled by this unusual suggestion and strongly advised me against it.

For Adolf, even service in the replacement reserve was far too great a concession to the Habsburg state, and while I was already packing my things, he talked to me incessantly to win me over to his plan. —

In Linz, I told my father what suggestion my friend had made, for secretly I was playing a little with this thought. Also, I could gain absolutely no affinity for military service. Even eight weeks of replacement service seemed like an abomination to me.

My father was even more startled by this than the Director of the Conservatory. "For God's sake, what are you saying?" he said, shaking his head. If I were to cross the border secretly—to put it bluntly, desert—I would be making myself liable to prosecution. Furthermore, I could never come home again, and my parents, who had already given up so much for my sake, would then lose me entirely.

These words from my father and my mother's tears were quite enough to bring me to my senses. That same day, my father went to a government official who was a friend of his to inquire about the possibilities of registering me for the replacement reserve. The official drafted a petition that I was to submit at the recruitment examination, should I be found fit for service.

I wrote to Adolf that I had decided on the path suggested by the Director of the Conservatory and would be going to the recruitment examination in a few days. After that, I would come to Vienna with my father. Perhaps Adolf had also changed his mind in the meantime and had realized that the path he wanted to choose for himself was not right for me after all, for in his reply he did not mention it again. Perhaps he also did not want to commit this risky plan to paper in a letter. On the other hand, he seemed pleased that my father would be coming with me to Vienna upon my return.

wanted to come. (The trip was cancelled, however, because the business reason had meanwhile become obsolete.) I had also written to Adolf that I wanted to bring my viola along to secure a side income as a violist in an orchestra if the opportunity arose. During my studies in Vienna, I had contracted conjunctivitis. In Linz, I had myself examined by an ophthalmologist known to us and wrote to Adolf that he should not be startled if I arrived at the Westbahnhof wearing glasses.

The letter that Adolf wrote shortly before Easter in response to mine to "stud. mus. Gustav Kubizek" has fortunately been preserved. It reads:

> "Dear Gustl!
>
> After first thanking you for your kind letter, I also wish to express my joy that your dear father is really coming to Vienna with you. Provided that you and your father have no objection, I will be waiting at the station on Thursday at 11 a.m. You write that you have such glorious weather; I am almost sorry to hear that, for if it didn't rain here, it would be nice too, not just in Linz. I was also very pleased that you are actually bringing a viola. On Tuesday, I will buy 2 kr. worth of cotton wool and 20 kreuzer worth of paste, for my ears, that is. That you are now also going to go blind has filled me with deep sorrow; you will now keep missing the mark more and more and reading the notes wrong. You'll go blind and I'll go crazy in time. Oh dear! In the meantime, however, I wish you and your worthy parents at least a happy Easter Monday and greet them as well as you cordially and most sincerely as your friend
>
> Adolf Hitler"

The letter is dated April 20th. Adolf thus wrote it on his birthday, of all days. That he does not refer to it in the letter itself is quite understandable given his situation at the time. Perhaps he did not even think about the fact that it was his birthday on that day.

As far as what Adolf writes refers to my father, the letter is extremely correct. Adolf even asks if it is alright with me and my father if he comes to the station to pick us up. But already at the point where the weather is mentioned, his mockery breaks through. "If it didn't rain here, it would be nice too." But then, when it comes to my viola, he opens the floodgates to his grim humor entirely. Even my eye ailment is mocked, until he calls himself to order with an "Oh dear!" and closes the letter very formally again. That Adolf was still at loggerheads with orthography is particularly evident from this letter clearly to be seen. His former German teacher, Professor Huomer, would hardly have given a "satisfactory" for it, because the punctuation is in even worse shape. These eternally repeating commas and periods, which constantly interrupted the lively flow of thoughts, were for him arrangements as bothersome as they were superfluous.

On the appointed day, I went for the military medical examination. I was found fit and submitted my application for admission to the replacement reserve.

When I returned to Vienna, incidentally without the feared glasses, Adolf received me very warmly, for it was after all pleasant for him that I remained with him. However, he mocked the "replacement reservist" vigorously. He said he could not imagine, with the best will in the world, how they wanted to make a soldier out of me. I could not imagine that either, to be sure. But I was already happy that I could continue my studies. At home, Adolf drew my head and placed a parade hat with a plume over it. "You look like a veteran, Gustl," he said, "even before you are a recruit!"

After the long, gloomy winter, it had finally become spring. Since I had seen the native fields again on my trip to Linz for the medical examination, our dark room in the rear building of Stumpergasse seemed much darker to me than before. Mindful of our numerous hikes across the length and breadth of the near and distant surroundings of Linz, I tried to persuade Adolf to take trips and hikes into the Vienna excursion area. I now had a little more time at my disposal, because my female students had meanwhile passed their exams and had departed for their homes, not without surprising me with a considerable extra gratuity for the well-passed exam. Thus, the wallet was also somewhat filled, at least for me. When everything began to bloom in the gardens of the Ring and the mild spring sun beckoned, I could no longer stand it within the dull walls of the city. Adolf likewise longed to be out. I knew, after all, how much he loved the free, open country, the cheerful meadows, the solemn forests, and in the distance the blue jagged crown of the mountains. In his own way, he had long ago found a solution to this problem from me, for as soon as it was too cramped and musty at Mrs. Zakreys' and smelled too strongly of petroleum, he ran into the Schönbrunn Park. But this was by no means enough for me. I wanted to see more of the surroundings of Vienna. Adolf wanted that too, but first — he had no money for such "extra expenses," as he said. That could be remedied by my inviting him to be my guest on excursions. To be sure for all eventualities, I bought provisions the day before. Second — a much more difficult point — he had to get up early in the morning if we wanted to make a proper day trip. That was not easy for him, as he was more willing to do anything else than to get up early.

An attempt to shake him awake was a risky undertaking. He could become quite unbearable then. "Why are you waking me so early?" I would be shouted at. When I then said that it had long been broad daylight, he would never accept that. I leaned my upper body out of the window and looked steeply upwards over the desolate firewalls to see the narrow strip of sky. "A cloudless day!" I noted. "The sun is shining!" But when I turned around, Adolf was already asleep again.

If one finally succeeded in getting him out of bed and into motion, one nevertheless had to write off the first hours of the day, because after such an unexpectedly "early" awakening, he remained completely withdrawn and silent for a long time and answered all questions only with an unwilling grunt. Only further out, where it became bright and green, did he slowly wake up from his brooding. Then, of course, he was delighted and happy and even thanked me for having woken him and for not having given in.

Our first destination was the Hermannskogel in the Vienna Woods. We were truly lucky with the weather. Even as we moved out beyond Sievering, the sun shone magnificently, and trees were blossoming everywhere. In the vineyards, the first green was stirring, and higher up the beeches stood in young, fresh foliage. I could literally feel how much good the hike did Adolf after weeks of sitting over books and drawing sheets. On the Hermannskogel, we vowed to go out more often now. Via Klosterneuburg, we went to the train and back into the narrow cage at Mrs. Zakreys'.

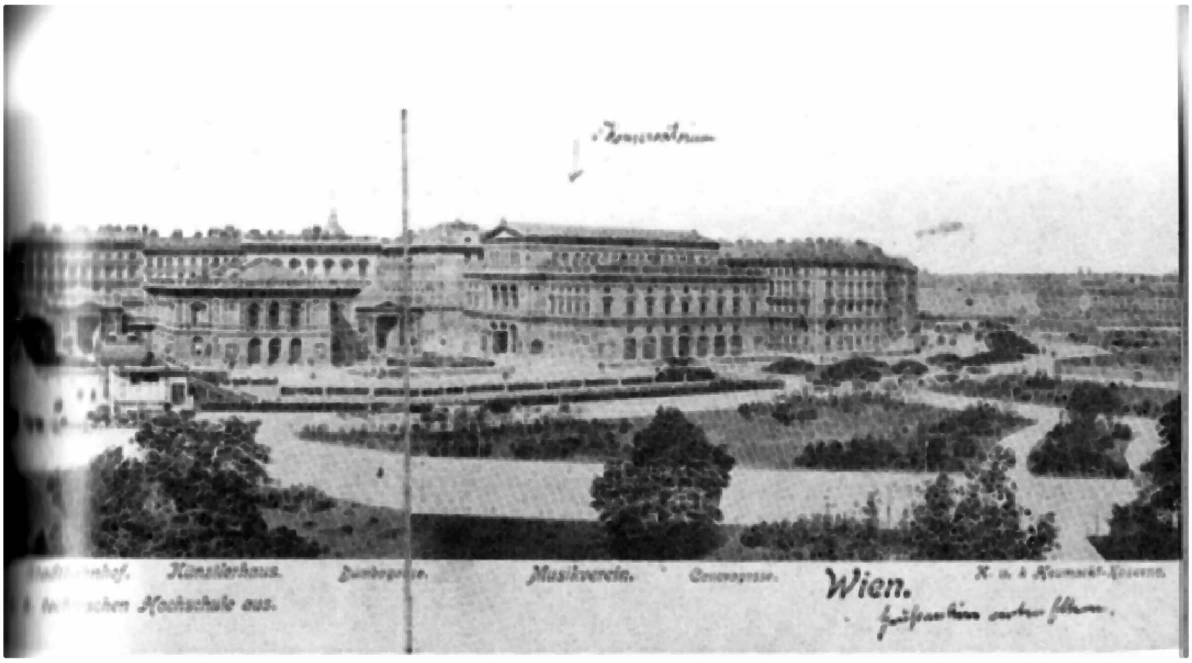
Next Sunday we went to the Vienna Woods again. We did not exactly look adventurous with our long trousers, dark city coats, and light street shoes, but we were. On this day, we covered a quite respectable distance by our standards. From St. Andrä-Wördern at the beginning of the Tullner Feld, where we had traveled with the morning train, we hiked back to the city via Königstetten, Katzelsdorf, Ried, Gablitz, and Purkersdorf. Adolf was enchanted by the area and claimed that it reminded him of certain parts of the Mühlviertel, which he loved very much. Certainly, he too, without ever admitting it, felt homesick for the land of his childhood, although no one there thought of him anymore.

For a trip to the Wachau, I even took a weekday off from the conservatory. We had to run to the Westbahnhof very early to travel to Melk. Adolf was only reconciled with this day when he saw the magnificent abbey. But then, thoroughly. I could hardly get him...

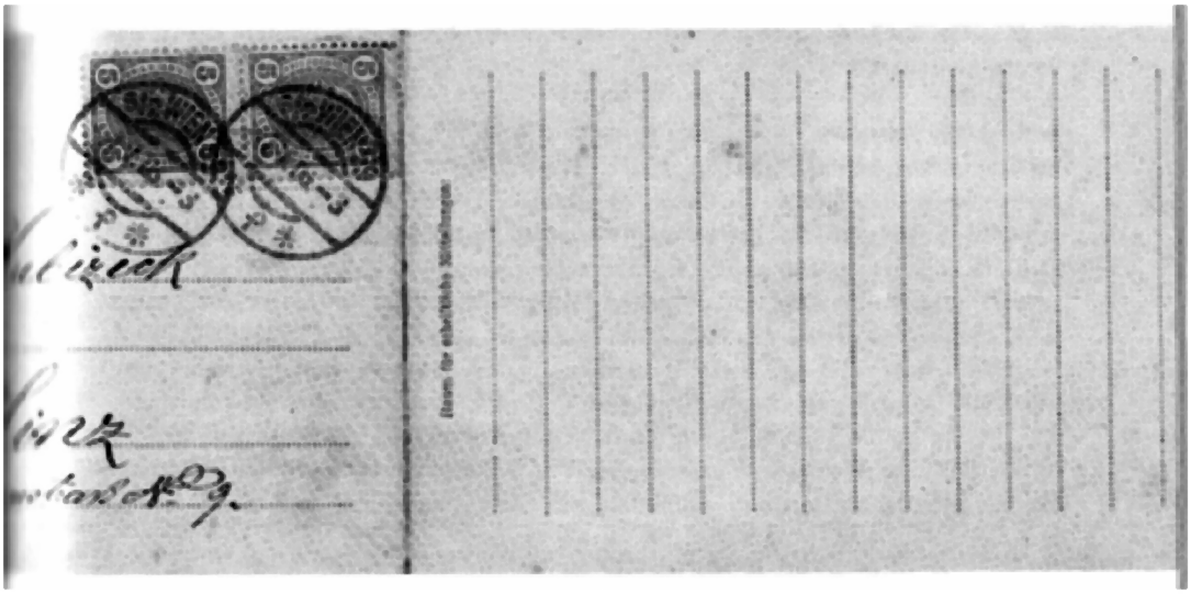
away from it. In doing so, he by no means adhered to the official tour, but rather sought out secret passages and hidden stairs again to get close to the foundation walls. He absolutely wanted to investigate how these had been placed upon the rock. In fact, one could almost believe that the massive structure of the abbey had grown out of the stone. After that, the magnificent library hall held us captive for a long time. We then took the steamer through the Wachau, resplendent in its May finery. Over there on the left Weitenegg, then Schönbühel on the right, Aggstein on a steep cliff, the charming Spitz, Weißenkirchen, an idyll in itself — Adolf was like a changed man. The Danube alone! Finally, he was back on his beloved river, for this Vienna did not possess such a close connection with the Danube as, for instance, Linz, where one could wait until a handsome blonde girl from Urfahr came across the bridge. How he had missed the Danube, almost as much as he still missed Stefanie. And now the castles, the villages, the vineyards on the steep mountain slopes pass silently by us. One hardly feels that one is moving forward oneself. Rather, it looks as if one were standing still, and this wonderful landscape were moving past us in a calm rhythm. What a romantic world! It touched us like a spell. Adolf stands at the bow and is completely immersed in the landscape. When we had long since passed Krems and were driving through the vast, monotonous riverside forests that accompany the river on both sides, he still did not speak a word. Where might his thoughts have been dwelling?

As if this enchanting journey had required a counterweight, the next time we traveled down the Danube as far as Fischamend. I was disappointed. Was this really the same river that had put us into such bright delight, our dear, familiar Danube? Warehouses, oil refineries, material depots, in between wretched fishing huts, slums, and now even real gypsy camps. Where had we ended up? That was the "other" Danube, which no longer belonged to the image of our homeland, but to an eastern world foreign to us. With conflicted feelings, Adolf very pensive, I disappointed, we returned home.

But the most vivid memory for me is a trip into the mountains, which took place in early summer. The distance to the Semmering was long enough to wake Adolf up despite the far too early hour. Soon after Wiener Neustadt, the world began to become "hilly." To gain the height of the Semmering, the railway had to turn into the side valleys in wide arcs. Laboriously, like the people who live in the mountains climbing upwards with slow, deliberate steps, the train also climbed leisurely onto the mountains. Many hairpins and wide-sweeping curves, tunnels, and viaducts were necessary to gain the height of nine hundred and eighty meters. Adolf was enthusiastic about the bold layout. From one surprise fell



The reverse side (below) with the note
that he will visit the opera on three consecutive days.



Youth portrait of Hitler. Origin can no longer be determined with certainty.

from one to the other. He would have loved to get off to walk and examine this daring railway line on foot. I was prepared to hear a fundamental lecture on mountain railway construction at the next opportunity, for he certainly already had an even bolder alignment, even higher viaducts, and even longer tunnels in his head.

Semmering! We got out. A glorious day. How pure the air was here after all that dust and smoke, how blue the sky! The meadows glowed a lush green, the forests stood out darkly against them, and above them, with snow still on the peaks, the mountains rose up.

The train back to Vienna did not leave until evening. We had time. The day belonged to us.

Adolf immediately decided on the goal of our hike: Which of the mountains rising up here is the highest? I believe we were told it was the Rax. So we climbed this mountain.

Neither Adolf nor I had a clue about mountaineering. The highest "mountains" we had conquered in our lives were the gentle hills of the Mühlviertel. We had only seen the Alps themselves from a distance until now. But now we stood right in the middle of them. The fact that this mountain is over two thousand meters high impressed us immensely.

As was always the case with Adolf, the will had to replace the lack. We had no provisions, because originally it was not a mountain tour that had been planned, but a hike down from the heights of the Semmering to Gloggnitz. We didn't even own a backpack. Our clothing was the same as what we wore on a stroll through the city. The shoes were much too light, with thin soles, without hobnails. Trousers and a coat, that was all, without any warmer piece of clothing. But the sun was shining and besides, we were young. So, let's go!

The experience we had during the descent so completely overshadows the memory of the ascent that I can no longer say which paths we took uphill. I only remember that we had to climb for several hours and then reached the summit plateau, which seemed to us to be the highest point, which is not to say that it really was the Rax. I had never climbed a mountain peak before. I had a strangely light, free feeling. It seemed to me as if I no longer belonged to the earth, but was already very close to heaven.

"Blessed wasteland on blissful heights"—Siegfried's words after he climbed the Brünnhilde rock came to my mind.

Adolf, however, stood moved on the summit plateau and was silent.

The view went far out over the land. Here and there, a church tower, a village appeared in the colorful tangle of forests and meadows. How small and how insignificant the things of men appeared!

It was a glorious hour, perhaps the most beautiful, the closest to God, that I experienced with my friend.

The enthusiasm made us forget all weariness. Somewhere in our pockets, a piece of dry bread was found. That had to suffice. In the happiness of this day, we had hardly noticed the weather. Had the sun not just been shining? Now, dark clouds suddenly pushed forward. Fog rolled in. It happened as quickly as the scene of the Pentecost Meadow is transformed into the dark Wolf's Glen on stage.

A storm arose and whipped the fog in long, fluttering banners before us. From afar, a thunderstorm rumbled. Dull and eerie, the thunder echoed in the mountains. This was no longer gentle theatrical thunder.

In our pitiful "Ringstrasse attire," we began to freeze miserably. The thin trousers flapped around our legs. With flying coat-tails, we hurried down to the valley. But the path was stony; our shoes were in no way equal to what the mountain demanded of them. And besides, despite our haste, the thunderstorm was faster than we were. Already, the first drops struck splashingly through the forest. Then the rain set in. And what a rain! Real torrents flowed down upon us from the clouds pressing closely over the treetops. We ran and ran as fast as we could. It was futile to protect ourselves against the thundershower. Soon there was no longer a dry spot on us, and water stood in our shoes as well.

And no house, no hut, no refuge far and wide! Adolf, who usually knew advice and help in every situation, did not care about lightning and thunder, about storm and rain. To my surprise, he was in a splendid mood and, although soaked to the skin, became increasingly cheerful as the rain increased.

We leaped down over stone debris. Away from the marked path, I discovered a small hay hut. There was no point in running around in the rain any longer. Besides, it would soon be dark. So I suggested to Adolf that we spend the night in this shed. He immediately agreed. The adventure, it seemed, could not last long enough for him.

I searched through the small wooden hut. In the lower part of the room, there was still a little hay, dry and enough for both of us to sleep in. Adolf took off his shoes, coat, and trousers and began to wring out the clothes. "Are you also so very hungry?" he asked. When I answered his question in the affirmative, he felt somewhat relieved. Shared sorrow is half sorrow. That apparently applies to hunger as well.

In the meantime, I had discovered in the upper part of the hut large square cloths made of coarse linen, which are used by the farmers to carry the hay down from the steep mountain meadows. I felt sorry for Adolf, as he stood there in the doorway in his soaked undergarments, shivering with cold, wringing out the sleeves of his coat. How easily he could catch pneumonia, given his susceptibility to all kinds of chills. So I took one of the large cloths, spread it out on the hay, and told Adolf he should also take off his wet shirt and underpants and wrap himself in the dry cloth. He did so. Naked, he lay down on the cloth. I folded the ends together and wrapped him tightly in it. Then I got a second cloth and covered him with it as well. After that, I wrung out his and my underwear and hung them, as well as the clothes, up in the hut, then likewise wrapped myself in one of the cloths and lay down. So that we would not freeze during the night, I threw some more hay over the bundle in which Adolf was tucked, and a second bale over myself.

Since we possessed no pocket watches, we did not know what time it was. But in our situation, it was quite enough to establish that dark night lay outside the hut and the rain roared incessantly down upon the roof. Somewhere in the distance, a dog barked. We were therefore not too far from a human habitation, a thought that greatly reassured me, but left Adolf, when I mentioned it, completely indifferent. People were quite superfluous to him in this situation. He was enjoying the whole enterprise immensely, its romantic conclusion suiting him very well. We were now also nice and warm. It would have been almost cozy in the small dark hut if hunger had not plagued us so much.

When I woke up in the morning, the light of day was already falling through the gaps in the boards. I stood up. The clothes were almost dry. I still remember what a feat it was to wake Adolf. Then, in his wrapping, he freed his feet and stepped toward the door, the hay-cloth wrapped around his loins, to check the weather. His slender, tall, lanky figure in the white cloth thrown toga-like over his shoulder corresponded to that of an Indian ascetic.

This was our last great journey together.

ADOLF'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN

When we strolled up and down the foyer of the Opera during the intermissions of a performance, I noticed the attention the girls and women paid to us. At first, I was understandably in doubt as to which of the two of us this obvious interest referred, and secretly assumed that it was meant for me. Closer observations, however, soon taught me that this striking preference was not for me, but exclusively for my friend. Despite his modest clothing, his reserved and cool demeanor in company, Adolf pleased the ladies strolling by so much that occasionally one or another even turned her head after him, a behavior that was considered improper according to the strict etiquette prevailing at the Court Opera. I wondered all the more about this, as Adolf in no way provoked this behavior; on the contrary, he hardly noticed the encouraging play of the ladies' eyes or only made a reluctant remark about it to me. But these observations were enough for me to establish that my friend had pronounced luck with the opposite sex, a luck which, to my astonishment, he in no way wanted to exploit. Did he not grasp these clear opportunities or did he just not want to grasp them? I assumed the latter, for Adolf was too sharp and critical an observer to overlook something taking place in his surroundings, especially things concerning himself. But why did he not take up any of these opportunities? How much could he have made his bleak, desolate existence in a rear building of the Mariahilf suburb, which he himself called a "dog's life," more beautiful through acquaintance with an attractive, witty girl? Was not Vienna called the city of beautiful women? That this word was true—we were often enough able to convince ourselves of that. What kept him from doing what was a matter of course for other young men? That he had not considered this possibility from the start was proven to me by the fact that we, at his suggestion, had moved into a room together. He had not asked me at the time whether that was all right with me or not. According to old habit, he took for granted from me what he considered right for himself. With regard to girls, my restraint was undoubtedly already for that reason...

pleasant, so that I could devote my otherwise limited free time entirely to him.

One small episode has remained in my memory. We were at the opera. I no longer remember what was being performed. But when we returned to the standing area of the stalls after the intermission, one of the liveried servants came after us, plucked Adolf by the sleeve, and handed him a note. Adolf, not in the least surprised, but rather as composed as if it were an everyday occurrence, took the note, thanked him, and hastily scanned the lines. I thought I had finally come upon the trail of a great affair, or at least the beginning of a tender secret. But Adolf merely said disparagingly: "Another one," and handed the note to me. Then he looked at me from the side, half-searching, half-mocking, and asked if I might perhaps like to go to this announced rendezvous. "It concerns you, not me," I said somewhat irritably, "and besides, I would not want to cause this lady any disappointment."

Every time it concerned members of the fair sex, "it concerned him, not me," regardless of which social class the female persons in question belonged to. Even on the street, this one-sided preference for my friend remained in effect. When we walked home through the alleys at a late hour from the Opera or the Burgtheater, now and then, despite our poor clothing, one of the strolling street girls would speak to us and invite us to come along. But it was always only Adolf who was given the "glad eye."

I remember well that during that time I often secretly wondered what the girls found so attractive about Adolf. Certainly, he was a well-built young man with regular features, but by no means what is generally called a "handsome" man. I had seen "handsome" men on stage often enough to know what the world of ladies understood by that. Perhaps it was the unusually bright eyes that attracted girls and women. Or was it the strangely stern expression that rested upon his ascetic countenance? Perhaps only his visibly displayed indifference provoked members of the opposite sex to actually test this masculine resistance. In any case, the women—in contrast to men, such as his teachers and professors—seemed much more likely to sense the uniqueness of my friend.

The gloomy mood of decline that hung over the Danube Empire in those years had created a light-hearted, shallow atmosphere in Vienna, whose hollowed-out moral concepts were covered up by the now-famous Viennese charm. The much-sung, much-celebrated slogan "Sell my clothes, I'm going to heaven!" also drew broad middle-class layers into the superficiality of the morbid "better circles." That sweltering

Eroticism, which celebrated triumphs in the stage works of an Arthur Schnitzler, determined the social tone. The saying circulating at the time, "Austria is perishing because of its women," seemed, as far as Viennese society was concerned, to be becoming a reality.

In the midst of this environment that had become fragile, whose obtrusively erotic basic mood could be felt at every turn, my friend lived in his self-chosen asceticism, observing girls and women with alert and critical interest, yet with the strict exclusion of everything personal, and allowed everything that became a personal experience for other men of his age to become a problem for him, about which he reported in nightly conversations as coolly and objectively as if he himself stood entirely outside these matters.

As in all other chapters of this book, in this one too, which intends to describe Adolf's relationship with women during our friendship, my aim is to stick precisely and unequivocally to my own experiences. From the autumn of 1904 to the summer of 1908, that is, for nearly four years, I lived side by side with Adolf. In these decisive years, as he grew from a fifteen-year-old boy into a young man, Adolf entrusted me with things that he had not admitted to any other person, not even his mother. Even in Linz, our mutual relationship was so intimate that I would have noticed it immediately if he had actually made the acquaintance of a girl. He would have lacked the time for me, his interests would have taken a different direction, and other such signs. But apart from his imaginary idealized love for Stefanie, nothing of the sort happened. I can provide no information about his temporary stays in May and June of 1906 and in the autumn of 1907, as Adolf was alone in Vienna at that time. However, I assume that a truly decisive love affair for him would have continued into the following period, which we spent together. I believe I can say with certainty that Adolf lacked an actual encounter with a girl both in Linz and in Vienna.

This direct experience, which during the shared stay in Vienna also extended to the smallest, seemingly incidental details, was confirmed by the thorough and detailed discussions that Adolf held with me on all questions regarding the relationships between the sexes. I had already experienced often enough that there was no difference between what Adolf presented to me and how he actually lived. His social and moral behavior was determined not by his wishes and feelings, but by his realizations and insights. In this respect, he had himself completely under control. As he absolutely

...had nothing left for that shallow superficiality of certain Viennese circles, I do not remember a single situation in which he would have let himself go regarding his relationship with the opposite sex. Likewise, I can fully and completely confirm that Adolf was absolutely normal in both physical and sexual respects. What was extraordinary about him lay neither in the erotic nor in the sexual, but in other areas of his being.

When he described to me in moving words the necessity of early marriage, which alone was capable of guaranteeing the life of the people for the future; when he explained to me measures by which the abundance of children in families could be increased—measures that later attained an unheard-of relevance; when he presented to me the connections between healthy housing and healthy life within the family and described how, in his "ideal state," the problems of love, sexual intercourse, marriage, the family, and offspring would be solved, I secretly thought of Stefanie. For what Adolf set forth here in such a convincing manner was, fundamentally, only the transfer of the ideal dreamed of with Stefanie onto the political and social level. He had desired Stefanie as a wife, for she had embodied for him the ideal image of the German woman; from her, he expected children; for her, he had designed that magnificent country house, which had become his model for the site of an ideal family life.

But all this was wish, dream, illusion. For several months, he had not seen Stefanie. He spoke of her less and less frequently. Even then, when I had unexpectedly traveled to Linz for my military induction, he had remained silent and had not, as I had expected, given me the task of inquiring about Stefanie. What did she still mean to him? Had the forced separation brought Adolf to the realization that it was most practical to forget Stefanie entirely? Whenever I had gradually familiarized myself with this view, it was guaranteed to be followed shortly thereafter by a virtually eruptive emotional outburst, which proved to me that he still clung to Stefanie with every fiber of his heart.

Nevertheless, it was clear to me that Stefanie was increasingly losing reality for Adolf and was transfiguring into a pure ideal image. He could no longer rush to the Landstraße to convince himself of the presence of the beloved being. He no longer received any news about her. His feelings and sensations for Stefanie visibly lost every real foothold. Was this, then, the end of a love that had begun with such great expectations?

Yes and no! It was the end insofar as Adolf was no longer the enthusiastic youth who, in his so typical...

exuberance was able to compensate for the slightest hopes with excessive self-overestimation. And yet, on the other hand, it remained completely incomprehensible to me how Adolf, now a young man with very correct views and goals, nevertheless held on to this love that had become completely hopeless, so much so that this love for Stefanie was strong enough to make him insensitive to the temptations of the big city.

I knew my friend's relentlessly strict views on the relationship between man and woman. I often racked my brains over how Adolf had actually arrived at this abrupt moral stance. His views on love and marriage were certainly not those of his father. His mother certainly loved her son very much, but she influenced him little in this regard. This was also not necessary, for she saw that Adolf did not compromise himself regarding his interactions with girls. The milieu from which Adolf originated was the general milieu of an Austrian civil servant family and a middle-class household. I could therefore only explain Adolf's strict views—which I shared with him to a certain extent, but did not want to generalize as much as he did—by his passionate devotion to social and political problems. His moral views were based not on experience, but on intellectual insights.

Added to this was the fact that in Stefanie, although he now realized she had become unattainable to him, he still saw the ideal of a German woman, an image that nothing he encountered in Vienna could reach. I often experienced how, whenever a woman made a strong impression on him, he would begin to speak of Stefanie and draw comparisons that each time turned out to the disadvantage of the person in question.

As unbelievable as it may sound, the "distant beloved," who did not even know the name of the young man whose love she should have returned, continued to exert a strong influence on Adolf, so that in his relationship with Stefanie he not only found his own moral views confirmed, but also arranged his personal lifestyle with the seriousness and consistency of a monk who has dedicated his life to God—in this Babel of sin that was Vienna, where even prostitution was artistically transfigured and celebrated, truly a special case!

The fact is that Adolf once wrote to Stefanie during that time. It can no longer be determined whether the sending of this letter falls within the period of our shared stay in Vienna or occurred earlier. The letter itself has been lost. I learned of it in a peculiar way. I told the archivist Dr. Jetzinger, whom I know and who is working on a biography of Adolf Hitler, about Adolf's love for Stefanie.

The scholar recently tracked down the old lady, who is spending the twilight of her life as a colonel's widow in Vienna; he was received by her and presented his strange request: to tell him about her youthful acquaintance with a young, pale student from Humboldtstraße, who had then moved to Blütengasse in Urfahr. He had regularly waited for her at the Schmiedtoreck in the company of his friend. The old lady then spoke of balls, carriage rides, excursions, and the like, which she had undertaken with young people, mostly officers, but she could not remember this peculiar person for the life of her, not even when, to her great astonishment, she learned his name. But suddenly, a memory flashed within her. Hadn't a letter once come to her, written in a somewhat confused style, which spoke of a solemn vow to remain faithful to her, and expressed the request not to expect further steps from the letter writer until he had completed his training as an artist and secured a livelihood? The letter was unsigned. But from the phrasing, it can be concluded without a doubt that Adolf was the sender. This was all the old lady knew to say.

In those hours when thoughts of his beloved became overwhelming in him, he no longer spoke directly of Stefanie, but threw himself with great emotional expenditure into discussions about state promotion of early marriage, about the possibility of financing a dowry for working girls by means of loans, and helping young families with many children to obtain a house and garden. I remember that we clashed violently at that time on one very specific point. Adolf proposed the establishment of state furniture factories to help young couples obtain cheap home furnishings. I turned decisively against this idea of mass-producing furniture. After all, I knew something about furniture. But such furniture had to be good, solid craftsmanship, not ready-made. We drew up calculations and saved money in other areas so that every young couple could have furniture in their home according to their personal taste—beautiful, solid furniture, fabric-covered chairs, and tasteful sofas, by which one could see that there were still master upholsterers in the country who understood their craft.

Just as much of what Adolf presented to me back then in long, nightly conversations has concentrated in memory into a specific word that was particularly typical of my friend's view, so above these discussions, conducted with a glowing heart, stands the strange word: "The

Flame of Life!” Time and again, whenever questions of love, marriage, or sexual problems were touched upon, this conjuring formula emerged. To keep “the flame of life” pure and intact would be the most important task of that ideal state with which my friend occupied himself during lonely hours. Given my innate preference for concrete definitions, it was not entirely clear to me what Adolf understood by this “flame of life.” The word occasionally changed its meaning. But I believe that I eventually understood Adolf correctly after all. The flame of life was the symbol of the noble love that awakens between people who have kept their bodies and spirits pure and are worthy of a union from which a healthy offspring grows for the people. Such urgently presented and constantly repeated slogans—Adolf possessed a carefully constructed selection of such expressions—had a quite peculiar effect on me. When I heard these solemnly proclaimed words, which seemed somewhat pathetic to me, for the first time, I secretly smiled at the high-flown formulation, which stood in such obvious contrast to the insignificance of our existence. Nevertheless, the word stuck in the memory. Just as a thistle clings to the sleeve of a coat with a hundred barbs, so this word clawed its way in. It simply could no longer be removed. If I then found myself in any situation that had perhaps even a very remote connection to this topic—a girl met me as I walked alone in the evening through Mariahilfer Straße, a pretty young lady, so it seemed to me, perhaps a bit frivolous, for she turned around toward me quite noticeably. Now I was certain, at any rate, that her attention was meant for me alone! She must even have been very frivolous, for she beckoned to me invitingly!—but then suddenly this word stood before me. “The flame of life”—a single thoughtless hour and this sacred flame is extinguished for your whole life! Even if I had been annoyed by these moral formulations, in such moments they do work after all. Moreover, one word was connected to the other. It began with the “storm of the revolution” and then continued through the numerous political and social coinages to the “Holy Reich of all Germans.” Perhaps Adolf had found some of these slogans in books. Of others, I know that he coined them himself. Gradually, these individual definitions joined together into an almost closed system. Since nothing could happen that would not have interested Adolf, every phenomenon of the time was also examined to see how it could be integrated into his circle of political ideas.

Sometimes my memory made wild leaps. Thus, next to the unapproachably sacred “flame of life,” there immediately stands the “sink of vice,” although this expression ranked at the very bottom in my friend's world of concepts. In the "Ideal State," there was understandably no longer any "sink of vice" at all. With this word, Adolf described the prostitution prevailing in Vienna at that time. As a typical phenomenon of those years of general moral decay, it confronted us in the most diverse forms. In the elegant streets of the city center as the reaction of the leading social circles, arising from sexual inhibition, to the inner instability of life; in the slum districts of the suburbs in the repulsive, loathsome form of public intrusiveness. Adolf was immensely outraged by these phenomena. However, he did not attribute the blame for the widespread prostitution to those directly involved, but to those who were responsible for the prevailing political and economic conditions. He called this harlotry a "stigma of the times." Again and again, he took up the problem and looked for solutions that should make any form of "purchasable love" impossible in the future.

One evening that I have not forgotten: We had been to a performance of Wedekind's "Spring Awakening," and had even, for once, stayed for the last act. The "gatekeeper's tip," which had become inevitable as a result, was already waiting in our trouser pockets. So we strolled home across the Ring and turned into Siebensterngasse. There Adolf linked his arm in mine and said abruptly: "Come, Gustl. For once we must see the 'sink of vice' for ourselves." I do not know what had moved him to do so. But he was already turning into the narrow, very poorly lit Spittelberggasse.

So there we were. We walked past the low, single-story houses. The windows, which were at ground level, were lit so that one could look directly from the street into the adjoining room. Behind the window panes, some at the open windows, sat the girls, some strikingly young, others prematurely aged and faded. Only lightly and carelessly dressed, they sat there, just putting on makeup, combing their hair, or looking at themselves in the mirror, without, however, losing sight of the men promenading past on the street. Here and there a man would stop, lean toward the window to look at the girl in question, and then a hastily whispered conversation would ensue. As a sign that the business was settled, the light was then turned off. I still remember what an impression this particular custom made on me, because one could read the respective frequency by the extinguishing windows. It was also the custom among the men, as a matter of principle, not to stop in front of darkened rooms.

However, we did not stop in front of the illuminated windows, but strolled down to Burggasse. But there Adolf turned around, and we walked once more along the "sink of vice." I thought that the simple experiment would suffice. But Adolf was already drawing me back toward the bright windows.

Perhaps these girls had also noticed the "special something" about Adolf; perhaps they had discovered that these were men with moral inhibitions, such as occasionally still came into the unholy city from the pious countryside; in any case, they felt compelled to redouble their efforts. I remember how one of these girls, just as we were passing the window, felt prompted to take off her chemise, or rather to change it; another girl busied herself with her stockings and showed her bare legs. I was honestly glad when the exciting gauntlet-run was over and we had finally reached Westbahnstraße, but I remained silent while Adolf flew into a rage over the seductive arts of the harlots.

At home, Adolf began to deliver a lecture on the impressions gained, as matter-of-factly and coolly as if it were a matter of his position on the fight against tuberculosis or the question of cremation. I was amazed at how he could speak about it without any inner excitement. Now, he said, he had become acquainted with the practices in the market of venal love, whereby the purpose of his visit was fulfilled. The starting point, he argued, lay in the fact that the man carries within himself his need for sexual satisfaction, while the girl in question thinks only of earning a living, perhaps to secure the existence of a man she truly loves, provided that this girl is still capable of love at all. Practically speaking, for these poor creatures, the "flame of life" had long since been extinguished.

I would like to tell of another episode. At the corner of Mariahilfer Straße and Neubaugasse one evening, a well-dressed, very middle-class-looking man approached us and asked about our living conditions. When we told him that we were students—"my friend is studying music," Adolf explained, "I, architecture"—he invited us to the Hotel Kummer for dinner. He let us order whatever we wished. Finally, for once, Adolf could eat his fill of pastries and cakes. During this, he told us that he was a manufacturer from Vöcklabruck and that he rejected the company of women, as they were only oriented toward making money. I particularly liked what he told us about house music, to which he was very receptive. We thanked him; he even accompanied us out onto the street, and then we went home.

Back at our quarters, Adolf asked me how I had liked this gentleman.

"Exceptionally good!" I replied, "a very cultivated man with pronounced artistic inclinations."

"And what else?" Adolf asked with an expression on his face that was enigmatic to me.

"What else should there be?" I asked in astonishment.

"Since you apparently do not grasp, Gustl, what this case is about, look at this small card!"

"Which card?"

In fact, this man had slipped Adolf a business card without my noticing it, on which an invitation was noted to visit him at the Hotel "Kummer."

"It concerns a homosexual," Adolf explained matter-of-factly.

I was startled. I had not even heard the word until then, let alone being able to imagine anything specific by it. So Adolf enlightened me about this phenomenon. Naturally, this too had long since become a problem for him, which he wanted to see fought by all means as an unnatural phenomenon, just as he personally kept such people at a distance with almost anxious conscientiousness. The business card of the notorious manufacturer disappeared into our potbelly stove.

It seemed natural to me that Adolf turned with disgust and loathing against these and other sexual aberrations of the big city, that he also rejected self-gratification, which is common among young people, and also subjected himself in all sexual matters to those strict rules of life that he prescribed for himself and a future state. But why did he not seek to gain social connections and, despite his relentlessly hard principles, gain new inspiration in a serious, witty, socially and politically open-minded environment and emerge from his isolation? Why did he always remain a loner, the solitary one, who avoided all social interaction, even though he took part in all human events with a passionate heart? How easy it would have been for him, with his so clearly defined talents, to acquire a position in the social circles of Vienna that kept themselves free from the general decadence, from which he could not only gain new insights and information, but also give his lonely life a different direction. After all, there were still more thoroughly decent people in Vienna than others, only they did not come into their own clearly enough. He had no reason to distance himself from people for moral reasons. In fact, any arrogance was far from him. It was rather his poverty and the sensitivity associated with it that made him live lonely. Furthermore, he believed that something...

to forgive if he indulged in any social conversations and distractions. He considered himself far too good for a superficial flirtation or a relationship with a girl aimed only at sexual satisfaction. Moreover, he would never have tolerated such a dalliance on my part either. Every step in this direction would have inevitably meant the end of our friendship, because Adolf, apart from the reprehensibility he saw in such behavior, could never have endured my having an interest in other people alongside my friendship with him. As before, absolute exclusivity applied to him in this regard.

Although I knew how much Adolf rejected social events, I did one day make an attempt in that direction. The opportunity that presented itself seemed extremely favorable to me.

Occasionally, music enthusiasts would come to the secretariat of the conservatory looking for music students to participate in a chamber music evening at their home. This participation offered not only a very welcome side income—one usually received a fee of five crowns, plus a frugal dinner—but also brought some social glamour into my meager student existence. As a capable violist, I was in great demand. Thus, I also found entry into the family of a wealthy manufacturer on Heiligenstädter Straße, Dr. Jahoda. It was a circle of people with great understanding of art and very cultivated taste, a truly witty sociability of the kind that flourished only on Viennese soil and had always fertilized the artistic life of the city. On one occasion, I also spoke of my friend at the table and was invited to bring him along next time. This was what I had wanted to achieve. Now I was very happy about it.

Adolf actually went along. He also liked it exceptionally well. He was particularly impressed by the library that Doctor Jahoda had set up, which for Adolf represented an essential yardstick for judging the people gathered there. It bothered him less that he had to remain an uninvolved listener throughout the evening, although he had imposed this role on himself. On the way home, he explained to me that he had felt quite comfortable with these people, but since he was not a musician, he could not have joined in the debate. Nevertheless, he also visited the house music evenings with me at the Graf and Grieser families, where only his inadequate clothing bothered him.

In the midst of the corrupt city of Vienna, my friend surrounded himself with a wall of secure, unshakable principles that made it possible for him to lead his life independently of the threatening environment in complete inner to build freedom. He feared, as he often told me, infection. Today I know that by this he meant not only sexual infection, but a much more general one, namely the danger of being complicit in the prevailing conditions and ultimately being drawn into the vortex of corruption. It is understandable that no one understood him, that he was considered an eccentric, and that the few he encountered described him as arrogant and overbearing. But he continued on his way, untouched by the affairs of men, though admittedly also untouched by a truly great, sweeping love. He remained a lonely man and guarded — strange contradiction! — in strict monastic asceticism the holy "flame of life."

IN PARLIAMENT

The image I have drawn of my childhood friend so far would remain insufficient if it were not supplemented and rounded off by a description of his immense interest in political matters. That this description only occurs at the end of the book and perhaps remains inadequate despite my efforts is not due to my lack of insight, but rather to the fact that I primarily indulged in artistic inclinations and politics meant next to nothing to me.

Even more than in Linz, I felt like a developing artist at the Conservatory in Vienna, for which my successes gave me some cause, and I wanted nothing to do with politics. With my friend, however, the development ran in reverse. While in Linz his interest in art had still dominated over his political interests, in Vienna, as the central point of political events in the Danube Empire, politics gained priority; indeed, it gradually absorbed other interests as well. Without a doubt, this contradictory development, through which I became increasingly unsuitable as a conversation partner for Adolf, was one of the reasons that prompted him to abruptly break off the friendship with me.

I became a witness to how almost every problem he took up, no matter how seemingly remote, ultimately flowed into the political. His originally artistic-aesthetic attitude toward the phenomena of his environment transformed increasingly into a political consideration of events. About this characteristic transformation of his nature, he himself wrote:

"During the time of this bitter struggle between spiritual education and cold reason, the visual instruction of the streets of Vienna had rendered me invaluable services. The time came when I no longer walked blindly through the mighty city as in the first days, but with an open eye examined not only the buildings but also the people."

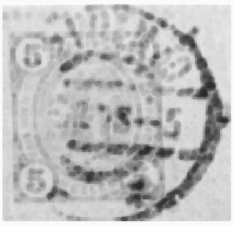
People interested him, who actually wanted to become a master builder, so much so that he even aligned his professional goals with the political. If he actually wanted to build what he held ready in his head and had partly already set down in completed plans—a new city, transformed by impressive structures such as the Danube Bridge, City Hall, Concert Hall, underground railway systems, mountain roads, and the Doge's Bridge over the steep banks of the...

Correspondence Card

Dear Gustl,

[Transcription of handwritten German text: Mentions arrival in Vienna, finding a room, and personal greetings.]

Yours, Adolf Hitler



To

Mr.

Gustav

Kubizek

in

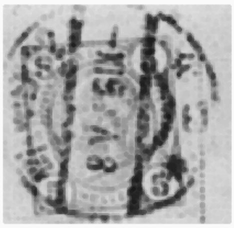
Linz a. D.

Klammstr. No. 9

Correspondence Card

[Transcription of handwritten German text: Mentions "Benkieser" and the intent to see Stefanie again.]

Yours, Adolf Hitler



To Mr.

Gustaph

Kubizeck

Linz

Klammstrasse No. 9

Further card greetings from Vienna. The designation "Benkieser" on the card below represents the code name agreed upon between the two friends for Adolf's youth love, Stefanie. He therefore meant: "Will or must see Stefanie again."

Postcard — Carte postale — Correspondence card
Cartolina postale — Post card — Levelező-Lap — Briefkaart

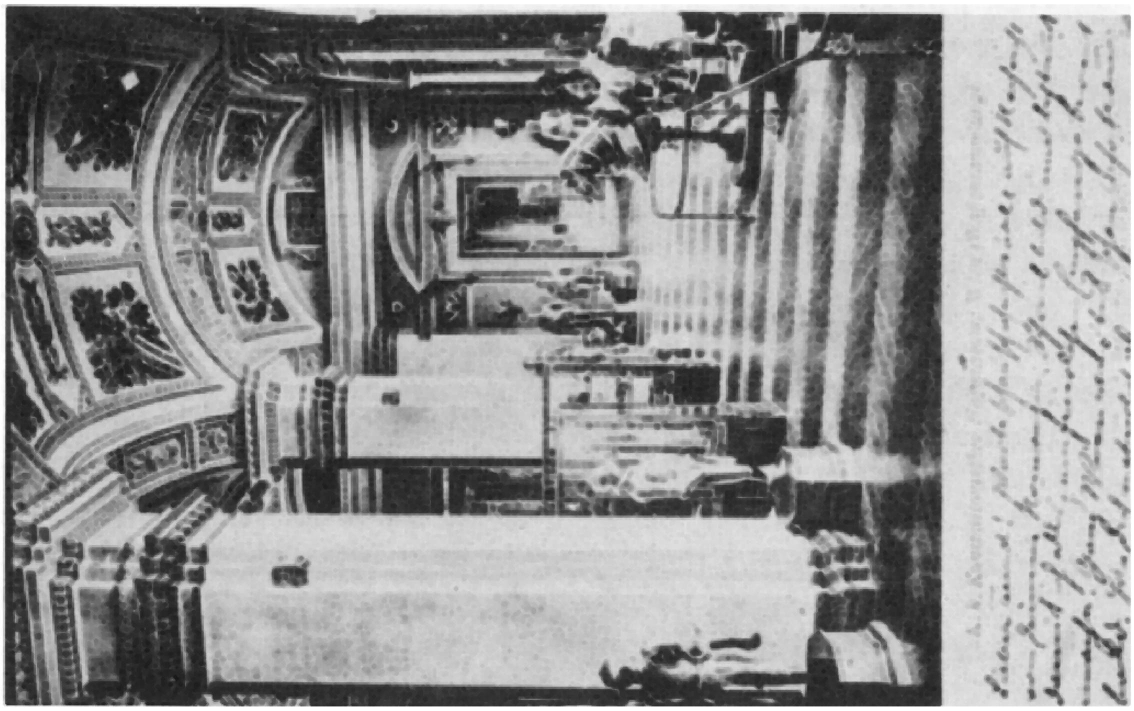
UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION — WELTPOSTVEREIN — UNIONE POSTALE UNIVERSALE

[Handwritten text in German script, transcribed and translated as:]

I am now finally settled in Vienna. I hope you will follow soon. My address is...

Publisher: J. LOWY
Court Photographer
Vienna 1903

To Mr.
Gustav Kubizek
Linz
Klammstrasse 9



Card from February 18, 1908, after Hitler had finally moved to Vienna, in which he asks his friend to follow soon.

...Danube narrows beautified Linz, a Vienna whose dark districts of misery were replaced by loosened residential areas pushed far into the Danube plain, then a revolutionary storm first had to eliminate the unsustainable political conditions and guarantee possibilities for a generous creation. Whatever thoughts and ideas he picked up, even such artistic notions as that of the "traveling orchestra," eventually flowed into his general political views upon consistent reflection. Instinctively, in the barely controllable abundance of tasks and problems that beset him, he searched for a point where the lever could be applied to move the enormous burden that weighed upon him and bring it in the desired direction. Until about his seventeenth year, he believed he had found this starting point in art and could create great things as a significant painter, poet, or architect. But he may then have realized that his artistic talent was not sufficient for this, for even the most glowing will cannot replace a lack of talent. Perhaps even then, art appeared to him as a path that was ultimately too distant and laborious to achieve the goals he strove for. In Vienna, art, viewed from his personal will, had already become a little-promising detour, for in the meantime he had discovered for himself the starting point appropriate to his nature: politics.

In fact, politics increasingly took on a kind of key position for him in the hierarchy of values. Even the most difficult problems, which could not be solved on their own, became solvable at a stroke as soon as they were transferred into the political sphere. On this level, all decisions crowded together.

With that consistency with which he got to the bottom of the phenomena that occupied him and advanced to the decisive point of events, he had discovered, amidst the loud political activity of the capital and residential city, that point in which, as if gathered in a focal point, the diverging rays of politics joined together: the parliament.

"Come along, Gustl," it was said again one day. I asked him where he wanted to go; I had lectures to attend at the university and, besides, I had to prepare for the competition, a kind of performance test on the piano. But my objections made not the slightest impression on him. That was all not as important as what he had planned for today. Besides, he had already obtained a ticket for me.

I wondered what that could be. An organ concert perhaps, a guided tour through the picture gallery in the Hofmuseum?

But my lecture? And the competition? If I failed at that, it would be terrible for me.

"Come on, finally!" Adolf shouted angrily. I knew this expression on his face, which tolerated no contradiction. Besides, it had to be something special, because the fact that Adolf was already so lively and active at half past eight in the morning surprised me.

So I gave in and ran with him toward the Ring. At exactly nine o'clock, he turned into Stadiongasse and stopped in front of a small side gate where a few nondescript people, apparently just idlers, had gathered. Finally, a light dawned on me.

"Into Parliament?" I asked, startled, "what am I supposed to do in there?"

I remembered that Adolf had often told me about his visits to Parliament. To me, however, it seemed like a mere waste of time. But before I could say anything against it, he already pressed the admission ticket into my hand; the gate was opened, and an usher directed us to the gallery.

From up there, one had a very favorable overview of the imposing semicircle of the large session hall. The room, in its classical beauty and harmony, seemed to me worthy of an artistic performance. I could easily imagine a solemn concert here, a hymnic choral song, or perhaps, with some adaptations, the performance of an opera or even a sacred rite.

Adolf tried to explain the sober proceedings in Parliament to me, the uninitiated. "The man sitting up there looking rather helpless and swinging a bell every now and then, which no one pays attention to, is the Chairman. The dignified men in the elevated seats are the Ministers. In front of them, bent over their desks, sit the parliamentary stenographers, the only ones in this house who actually do anything. Therefore, they are relatively sympathetic to me, although I assure you that these truly industrious men have no significance at all. But in the benches in front of them, all the deputies of the kingdoms and lands represented in the Austrian Imperial Council should be sitting. Most of them, however, are strolling in the lobbies."

Then my friend explained the individual processes to me. Just then, a deputy introduced a motion and justified it. The fact that almost all the other deputies had left the hall in the meantime proved, he said, that they were not interested in this motion. But soon the Chairman would open the debate on it, and then things would become more lively.

I must say, Adolf found his way around the internal workings of Parliament quite well. He even had an agenda lying in front of him. Everything also took place exactly as he had predicted.

Musically speaking, the Honorable Member's solo had barely come to an end when the orchestra immediately joined in. The delegates flooding back into the hall shouted vehemently. One interrupted the other. The President rang the bell.

The delegates answered him by lifting their desk lids and slamming them shut again. Others had taken to whistling, and in the midst of this unholy spectacle, German, Czech, and Italian insults—God knows what all those languages were—flew through the hall.

I looked at Adolf. Was this not the best moment to leave? But what was wrong with my friend? He had jumped up, his fingers clenched into fists, his face burning with excitement. So I preferred to remain sitting quietly in my place, although I had no faint idea what the dispute was about. —

Parliament attracted my friend again and again, while I tried to shy away from it. Once, when Adolf had again pressured me to go there with him—I would have put our friendship at stake if I had refused—a Czech delegate gave an obstructionist speech lasting hours. Adolf explained to me that this was a speech where the only thing that mattered was to fill the time and prevent another delegate from speaking. It didn't matter what this Czech said; he could keep repeating the same thing, as long as he didn't stop. It really seemed to me as if this man were speaking *da capo al fine*. Of course, I didn't understand a word of Czech, nor did Adolf. I was truly sorry for the wasted time.

"You probably don't mind if I leave now," I said to Adolf.

At that, he snapped at me furiously: "Now, in the middle of the session?"

"But I don't understand a word of what this man is saying."

"You don't need to understand it either. It is an obstructionist speech, after all. I just explained that to you."

"Then I'm going."

"Stay!" Adolf cried angrily and dragged me back into my seat by my coat-tails.

So, in God's name, I remained seated and let the brave Czech, who was already quite exhausted, continue speaking. I have never wondered about Adolf as much as I did then. He was, after all, unusually intelligent and truly had his five senses about him. But as he sat there, every nerve strained, listening to this speech that he did not even understand, I could not comprehend him. But, I thought, perhaps the fault lay with me, and I presumably still did not understand what the essence of politics was.

Back then, I often asked myself why Adolf forced me to go to parliament with him. I could not solve this riddle until one day I realized that Adolf needed a partner with whom he could process his impressions. On such days, he would wait impatiently for my return home in the evening. Hardly had I reached the door to the room when I was already snapped at: "Where have you been so long?" I hadn't even eaten a bite when he already said: "When are you going to bed?"

This question had a special purpose. Since our room was so small that Adolf could only walk up and down if I either crouched on the stool behind the grand piano or went to bed, he wanted to create space for what he had to say to me.

Hardly had I crawled into bed when he began to pace up and down and let loose. Even from the excited tone of his voice, I recognized how much his thoughts were pressing upon him. He was literally overflowing and had to discharge himself in order to be able to endure the enormous tensions that filled him.

What moved him so much!

It was basically always the same: his love for Germandom, which exceeded all measure. With true fervor, he clung to his ancestral people. Nothing on this earth did he place higher than the love for everything that was German.

This Germandom, however, stood on the soil of the Danube Monarchy in a difficult, bitter struggle for its national existence. About this, he later writes:

> "One did not understand that, had the German in Austria not truly still been of the best blood, he could never have possessed the strength to imprint his stamp so much on a 52-million-state that even in Germany the erroneous opinion could arise that Austria was a German state. A nonsense of the gravest consequences, but nevertheless a brilliant testimony for the ten million Germans of the Ostmark."

And it continues:

> "Enormous were the burdens expected of the German people, unheard of its sacrifices in taxes and blood, and yet anyone who was not completely blind had to recognize that all this would be in vain. What pained us most was the fact that this entire system was morally covered by the alliance with Germany, whereby the slow extermination of Germandom in the old monarchy was also, to a certain extent, granted sanction from Germany itself."

But where should help be, if not from Germany? The Emperor was incapable of steering the struggle of all against all. The heir to the throne, Franz Ferdinand, on whom many hopes were pinned, was with a

Czech countess, Countess Chotek, and planned the establishment of a strong Slavic bloc of Catholic character. Thus, Austrian Germandom was left entirely to its own devices and fought bitterly for its rights.

With an overflowing heart, Adolf took part in this passionate struggle. The fact that the political situation for the Germans seemed so hopeless and without a way out spurred his zeal to the highest level of commitment and made him hate the Imperial House.

So there I lay awake in bed, while Adolf—as so often, since night conversations were among his habits—paced up and down in his excitement and spoke to me with such passion as if I were not a poor, insignificant music student, but a political ruler who had to decide on the existence or non-existence of the German people. —

Another night conversation has also remained unforgettable to me. Adolf had talked himself into a state of almost ecstatic devotion. But then he described the suffering that lay over this people, the disaster that stood at the gates, the future that remained full of threat and danger. In doing so, he was obviously fighting back tears.

But then these bitter accusations against the times led him back to his hopeful thoughts. He built again on the Reich of all Germans, which put the "guest peoples," as he called the other peoples of the monarchy, in their place.

When these explanations went on for too long, I sometimes fell asleep. As soon as he discovered this, he shook me awake and shouted at me, asking if his words no longer interested me? Then I should sleep peacefully, as everyone slept in these times who had no national conscience. I, however, sat up energetically and forced my eyes to stay open.

Later, Adolf developed a somewhat friendlier method during such night conversations. Instead of losing himself in utopias, he turned to questions that he assumed would interest me. For instance, he once went off against the savings clubs that had formed in numerous small taverns in the working-class districts. The individual paid in a certain weekly contribution and received the saved sum at Christmas. The treasurer was usually the innkeeper. Adolf criticized these clubs because the bill the worker ran up on such a "savings evening" was often higher than the amount saved, so that in truth the innkeeper remained the beneficiary. Another time he described to me in vivid colors how he imagined the student dormitories in his "ideal state." Bright, light bedrooms, a study room, a music room and a drawing room for general use, simple but hearty food, tickets for concerts, operas, and art exhibitions, free passes to the respective school.

Just as incidental things often imprint themselves particularly clearly on the memory, I also remember one such night-time conversation in which the Wright brothers' airplane was mentioned. In a newspaper article that Adolf read to me, it was stated that these world-famous pioneers of aviation had installed a small, relatively light artillery piece in their aircraft to test the effect of firing from the air. Adolf, who was a pronounced pacifist, was outraged by this. Hardly is a new invention made, he declared, and it is already placed in the service of war. At that time, he was a bitter opponent of war. Who orders the war? he asked. Certainly not the little man. Far from it! The war is arranged by the crowned and uncrowned rulers, driven and guided by the arms industry standing behind them. While these gentlemen earn gigantic sums and remain far from the line of fire, the little man must risk his life without knowing for what.

In general, the "little people," the "poor, betrayed folk," played a dominant role in his thinking. One day we saw a workers' demonstration on the Ring. Suddenly, the image of the street changed. The shutters were pulled down at the shops. The tram stopped. Policemen, on foot and mounted, rushed toward the demonstrators. We stood wedged between the spectators near the Parliament and could overlook the exciting scene well. The impression remained stuck in my memory. Is this the mood, I thought with a pounding heart, that Adolf called the "storm of revolution"? Some men strode ahead of the procession, carrying a large banner that took up the entire width of the street. On it stood the single word "Hunger!" There could have been no more inflammatory slogan than this to feel the distress of the impoverished masses, for how often did Adolf himself suffer bitter hunger.

There he stood now beside me, taking in the scene with all his senses. However strong his sympathy for these people might have been at that moment, he held himself back to the utmost and took in the whole process as objectively, coolly, and thoroughly as if, similar to his visits to Parliament, he were only concerned with studying the direction of the whole—the technical execution, so to speak, of such a demonstration. As much as he felt in solidarity with the "little people," he did not think in the least of actively participating in this rally, which was directed against the beer price increase announced just in those days.

Ever new masses pressed forward. The entire Ring seemed to fill with passionately excited people. The procession had become immeasurable. Red flags were carried along. But even more than flags and slogans, the emaciated, extremely poorly dressed figures and the faces of those passing by, marked by hunger and misery, proved how serious the situation was.

Bitter cries and shouts rang out. Fists clenched in anger. Those at the front had reached the square in front of the Parliament and attempted to storm the building. Suddenly, the mounted police who had accompanied the procession drew their sabers and began to strike at those standing closest to them. In response, a hail of stones flew toward them. For a moment, the situation stood on a knife's edge. But then, newly arriving reinforcements managed to disperse the demonstrators and break up the procession. —

The spectacle had gripped Adolf to his very core. But it was only back home in our room that his sympathy broke through. Yes, he identified with the hungry, the suffering, the outcasts. But he most sharply rejected the men who arranged such demonstrations. Who are the masterminds standing behind these doubly deceived masses, steering them according to their will? None of these shadowy figures behind the scenes lets himself be seen at such a mobilization of the masses. Why? Because their business can be conducted much better in the twilight and, moreover — because they do not want to risk their own necks, for they fear the powers against which they mobilize these masses just as much as they fear the masses themselves. Who leads these people of misery? Not men who have themselves experienced the hardship of the common man, but ambitious, power-hungry, and in some cases even alien politicians who enrich themselves on the misery of the masses. An outburst of rage against these political vultures concluded my friend's bitter indictment. That was his demonstration.

A question that tormented him after such experiences, although he never expressed it directly: where did he himself belong? If he took his own living conditions, the economic situation in which he found himself, the social milieu in which he lived as a yardstick, there was no doubt that he belonged to those people marching behind the hunger placards. He lived in a wretched, vermin-infested rear building; at noon, he often ate no more than a dry piece of bread on a bench in Schönbrunn. Perhaps many among these demonstrators were not even as badly off as he was. Why, then, did he not march in the procession of these people? What held him back?

Perhaps the feeling that, by virtue of his origin, he belonged to a different social class after all. He was the son of a

Austrian civil servants with the rank of captain. When he thought of his father, he saw him as the respected, esteemed senior customs official, before whom people tipped their hats and who had a weighty word to say at the citizens' table. In terms of prestige and bearing, the father had absolutely nothing to do with these people on the street.

Just as he was afraid of being infected by the general moral and political decay of the leading circles, he had an even greater fear of proletarianization. Certainly, he lived as a proletarian, but under no circumstances did he want to be a proletarian. Perhaps behind the unheard-of expenditure of energy with which he pursued his self-study, there was instinctively the intention of preserving himself from the plunge into mass misery through the most far-reaching and thorough education possible.

Ultimately, however, it remained decisive for Adolf that, according to his political views, he felt drawn to none of the ruling parties and movements. He did often say to me that he was a Schönerian body and soul. But he only said that between our four walls. As a starving, destitute student, he would have looked out of place in the ranks of Georg Ritter von Schönerer. To be able to commit himself entirely to this man, the Schönerer movement would have needed strong social impulses. What did Schönerer have to offer the masses who marched across the Ring? Nothing! The other side, however, Social Democracy, lacked an understanding of the national emergency in which the Germans of Austria found themselves. The international Marxist basis on which this movement had unfolded barred the masses of common people—and that is ultimately the people themselves—from the decisions that were just as necessary for the fate of the people as a solution to the social question.

Among the leading political minds of that time, the Mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger, impressed Adolf the most. But to commit himself entirely to his party, he was disturbed by the ties to the clergy, who constantly intervened in politics. Thus, during this time, Adolf found no spiritual home for the ideals that filled him. He remained a loner in his political thinking.

Despite the fact that in his absolute stubbornness he did not commit himself to any party, did not organize himself anywhere, and joined no association—with a single exception, of which I will speak later—one only had to go out onto the street with him to experience how intensely he participated in the fate of the people. In this respect, the city of Vienna offered him a most instructive object lesson. When we walked, for example, through the districts of Rudolfsheim, Fünfhaus, or Ottakring and returning workers passed us, it could happen that Adolf would grab me violently by the arm: "Did you hear, Gustl—Czech!" Another time we went out to the Spinnerin am Kreuz, because Adolf wanted to see this old Viennese landmark. There we encountered brickyard workers who were speaking Italian loudly and with violent gestures. "There you have your German Vienna!" he cried out indignantly.

This too was one of the constantly repeated phrases: "German Vienna." But Adolf uttered this phrase with a bitter undertone. Was this Vienna, into which Czechs, Magyars, Croats, Poles, Italians, Slovaks, Ruthenians, and above all Galician Jews were streaming from all sides, still a German city at all? For my friend, the conditions in Vienna became a symbol for the struggle of Germandom in the Habsburg State. He hated the Babel of nations in the streets of Vienna, this "incarnate blood-sin," as he later wrote. He hated this state that was ruining Germandom. His hatred turned directly toward the pillars of this state: the House of Habsburg, the politicizing clergy, the nobility, big capital, and Jewry.

The Habsburg state must collapse, the sooner the better, for every day that this state continued to exist cost the German people prestige, existence, land, and above all, people. He saw the fanatical struggle of the individual nations of this state against each other as the decisive symptom of the expected state collapse. He went to the Parliament to, so to speak, feel the pulse of the languishing patient whose imminent end was already being prophesied by everyone. Full of impatience, he awaited this hour, for only when the Habsburg state collapsed would the path be clear for those solutions of which he dreamed in lonely hours.

His accumulated hatred against all forces that oppressed Germandom concentrated above all on Jewry, which held a dominant position in Vienna. I soon began to feel this. One small, apparently incidental event has remained unforgettable to me.

I had realized that the starvation existence my friend led had to come to an end. It would be easiest to help him, I thought, if his literary works could be utilized. A fellow student, who was training as a singer at the conservatory, was active as a journalist for the "Wiener Tagblatt." I told him about Adolf. The young man had full understanding for his plight and suggested that my friend should first write a literary contribution as a trial and hand it over personally at the editorial office during his office hours. Then they could discuss further steps. That night Adolf wrote a novella, of which unfortunately only the title remains in my memory. It was called: "The Next Morning" — a foreboding title, for the next morning, when we went to Langegasse to speak with my colleague, there was a giant row. Adolf, having hardly seen the man, did not even let go of the novella, turned around in the doorway and shouted at me while still on the stairs: "You idiot! Didn't you see that he is a Jew?" I had indeed not seen that. But I became more cautious in such matters in the future.

It soon got worse. In the days when I had to practice a lot for the competition, Adolf stormed into the room in a state of extreme agitation. He said he had come from the police, explaining that there had been an incident on Mariahilfer Straße, with a Jew, of course. He was so upset that he first had to walk up and down for a while before he could tell me about the occurrence in coherent words. In front of the Gerngroß department store, a "Handelee" had been standing. The word "Handelee" referred to the Eastern Jews dressed in caftans and boots who traded in shoelaces, buttons, suspenders, and other knick-knacks on streets and squares. The "Handelee" formed the lowest level of those surprisingly quickly assimilating Jews who, in the course of time, occupied leading positions in the economic life of Austria. The "Handelees" were forbidden from begging from passers-by. This man, however, held out his open hand to people wailing, and some had given him a few kreuzers. A policeman who had observed this asked the Galician to produce identification. Then the latter began to wring his hands, saying he was a poor, old, sick man and had to live from his small trade. But he had not begged. The policeman led the wailing, screaming, raging "Handelee" to the guardroom and asked the bystanders who had seen the man begging from people to give their witness statements for the record. Despite his shyness about public appearances, Adolf had volunteered as a witness. Thus, he saw with his own eyes how three thousand crowns were pulled out of the "Handelee's" caftan—striking proof, as Adolf noted, of that exploitation of Vienna by the Jews immigrating from the East.

This experience also found its reflection in the book "Mein Kampf." Adolf writes:

> "As I was once strolling through the inner city, I suddenly encountered a phenomenon in a long caftan with black curls. Is this also a Jew? was my first thought. They certainly did not look like that in Linz. I observed the man stealthily and cautiously, but the longer I stared into this strange face and examined it feature by feature, the more the first question transformed in my brain into another version. Is this also a German? As always in such cases, I now began to try to resolve my doubts through books."

I remember well with what zeal Adolf studied the Jewish question back then; he spoke about it over and over again, as little as this problem interested me. At the Conservatory, there were Jews among both the teachers and the students. I had consistently good experiences with them and maintained excellent personal relationships with many of them. Was not Adolf himself enthusiastic about Gustav Mahler and enjoyed listening to the compositions of Mendelssohn-Bartholdy! One should not, after all, view the Jewish question one-sidedly from the standpoint of the "traders." Cautiously, I tried to dissuade Adolf from his attitude. The answer to this was very strange:

"Come, Gustl," it was said again, and I had to run with him to Brigittenau to save the money for the tram. But how astonished I was when Adolf led me into the synagogue. We entered the temple. "Keep your hat on!" Adolf whispered to me. Indeed, all the men had hats on their heads. It struck me even more that people were talking quite loudly, as if in a marketplace. Adolf had learned that a wedding would take place in this synagogue at a certain hour. And so it was. This ceremony made a strong impression on me. First, the gathered Jewish community joined in a strange antiphonal chant that I liked. Then the rabbi gave a Hebrew address and finally placed the prayer straps around the foreheads of the bridal couple.

I took this remarkable visit as a sign that Adolf, in his study of the Jewish question, really wanted to get to the bottom of this problem in order to convince himself of the still-prevailing religious ties of Judaism. This might perhaps have a mitigating effect on his one-sided attitude.

But I was mistaken, for one day Adolf came home and declared decisively: "I joined the Anti-Semite League today and signed you up as well."

That was the climax of that political violation to which I had gradually become accustomed with him. I was all the more astonished because Adolf so anxiously avoided joining any clubs or organizations. I remained silent, but I resolved to manage my affairs on my own in the future.

When I think back to this Vienna period and recall the content of those hours-long night conversations, I must conclude that Adolf gained that "worldview"—an expression he loved very much at the time—according to which he continued to organize his life. It stemmed from the immediate impressions and experiences he gained on the street and was expanded and deepened through reading. I received the first, often

...to hear an expression that was still unbalanced and immature, yet delivered with all the greater passion.

But I did not take all of this very seriously, because my friend played no public role, was in contact with no one but me, and therefore his plans and political intentions remained entirely up in the air. I did not dare to think that he might later be able to translate them into reality.

SUDDEN BREAK OF FRIENDSHIP

The performance competitions at the Conservatory were over. I had done very well in them. Now I still had to conduct at the final concert in the Johannes Hall, namely the first movement of the Violin Concerto in A major by Mozart — the soloist was my classmate Karl Penn — and a movement from the Piano Concerto in C minor by Beethoven with Mrs. Hornik as soloist, no easy task when one thought of the stage fright of the soloist and — the conductor. But everything went well. The second evening meant much more excitement for me, during which Kammersänger Rossi sang three of the orchestral songs I had set to music and two movements from my sextet for strings were performed for the first time. Both compositions brought me great success. Adolf was in the artists' room when Professor Max Jentsch, with whom I had studied composition theory, congratulated me. The head of the conducting school, Gustav Gutheil, also congratulated me, and finally, even the director of the Conservatory appeared in the artists' room to shake my hand warmly. That was a bit much for me, who only a year ago had been standing at the carding machine in the dusty upholsterer's workshop. Adolf glowed with enthusiasm and was truly proud of his friend. I could imagine what was really going on in his heart. Surely he had never felt the aimlessness of his stay in Vienna as bitterly as then, when he saw how I, in the midst of roaring triumph, was already on the sure path to the goal I strove for.

Only a few days more, and then the semester was over. I was already looking forward terribly to home, for despite my successful studies, the bitter feeling of homesickness had never quite left me in the strange metropolis. Adolf had no home and did not know where he should go. We discussed how the next weeks and months would pass. Mrs. Zakreys also came creeping into our room and asked with a slight cough how things would be with the two of us now.

"In any case, we will stay together," I declared immediately, by which I meant not only my being together with Adolf — that seemed a matter of course to me — but also the continued stay with Mrs. Zakreys, with whom we had lived together so well. Furthermore, my plan was set: immediately after the end of the semester, I wanted to travel to Linz, stay with my parents until autumn, and then undergo the eight-week training with the replacement reserve, which I had already informed the management of the Conservatory about. By the second half of November at the latest, I wanted to be back in Vienna. I promised to regularly send my share of the rent to Mrs. Zakreys so that the room would be kept for us.

Mrs. Zakreys also wanted to go to the countryside in the next few days. She had relatives in Moravia whom she wanted to visit. Now she was worried about having to leave the apartment alone. But Adolf immediately calmed the good woman. He would stay here and wait until she returned. Then he could still go to the Waldviertel for a few days to visit the relatives of his deceased mother.

Mrs. Zakreys was very pleased with this solution and assured us how satisfied she was with us. Two such nice young gentlemen, who pay their rent punctually and bring no female acquaintances to the room, she could no longer find in all of Vienna.

When I was alone with Adolf, I told him that in the next academic year I would strive to find a position as a violist with a Viennese symphony orchestra. This would improve my economic situation to the point that I could also help him sufficiently. Adolf, who was very irritable during these days, said neither yes nor no to my proposal. He also did not speak a word about his future plans, but I did not take it amiss in view of my successes. Also, to my great astonishment, I received no instructions at all to report to him about Stefanie. However, I resolved to write to him, as a matter of course, whatever I could find out about her. Adolf promised me to write diligently and to inform me about events in Vienna that might interest me.

The farewell — the date, early July 1908, is of particular significance — was difficult for both of us. Even though, despite my innate compliance, it had often not been easy to get along with Adolf, our friendly feelings had triumphed over all personal difficulties. We had known each other for nearly four years now and had grown well accustomed to one another in external matters. The rich treasure of shared artistic experiences in Linz and on many wonderful hikes, I had significantly increased and deepened in Vienna. For me, Adolf in Vienna represented a piece of my home, for he had experienced my most beautiful youthful impressions with me and knew me better than any other person. It was to him that I owed the fact that I had come to the Conservatory. This feeling of gratitude, deepened by the sensation of a true friendship, sprung from shared experiences, bound me unshakeably to him. I was ready to accept, most willingly, all the peculiarities that arose from his impulsive temperament in the future as well. How much I valued Adolf as my friend with increasing maturity and insight into life was proven by the fact that, despite our close living conditions and diverging interests, we actually understood each other much better in Vienna than in Linz. I was ready to go for him not only to the Parliament, to the synagogue, even to Spittelberggasse and God knows where else, and I was already looking forward to spending my next academic year at his side again.

Naturally, I meant much less to Adolf than he meant to me. The fact that I had moved with him from his homeland to Vienna perhaps reminded him, quite against his will, again and again of his own difficult family circumstances and the outward bleakness of his youth. Admittedly, my presence also reminded him of his love for Stefanie. Above all, however, Adolf had learned to value me as a willing listener. He could imagine no better audience, for because of his suggestive powers of persuasion, I agreed with him even in those cases where I was actually of a completely different opinion than he. But for him and what he intended to do, my views remained entirely irrelevant. He merely needed me to be able to speak to himself, for he could hardly carry on loud monologues on the old stone bench in Schönbrunn. When he was so filled with his idea that he had to discharge it, he needed me much as a soloist needs an instrument to give expression to his feelings. This, if I may say so, "instrumental character" of our friendship made me more valuable to him than corresponded to my own modest talents.

So we took our leave of one another. Adolf assured me for the umpteenth time how much he disliked being left alone. I should just imagine how desolate it would be for him in our shared room. Had I not already written to my parents about my arrival, I might have stayed in Vienna for a few more weeks, despite my susceptibility to that tiresome homesickness.

He accompanied me to the Westbahnhof. I stowed my luggage and stepped out onto the platform to him once more. Adolf hated sentimentalities of any kind. The more violently something affected him, the cooler he became. So now he only took my hands — unusual that he grasped both hands — and pressed them firmly. Then he turned around and walked with somewhat hurried steps toward the exit without looking back once more. I felt wretched. I boarded and was glad that the train started moving, making any other decision impossible for me. —

My parents were happy to have their only son back with them again. In the evenings, I had to tell them exactly how the final concerts had gone. My mother's beaming eyes were the most beautiful reward for me. When I entered the workshop the next morning with my shirt sleeves rolled up and my blue work apron tied on, and set to work vigorously, my father was also satisfied with me, for he saw that I still held in honor the craft that formed the basis of our existence. Without much ado, he handed over to me a larger commission from the Statthalterei for execution.

In my spare time, I missed Adolf very much. I would have liked to write to him something about Stefanie, although I had no commission for this. But I could never see her. Presumably, she had gone on summer vacation with her mother.

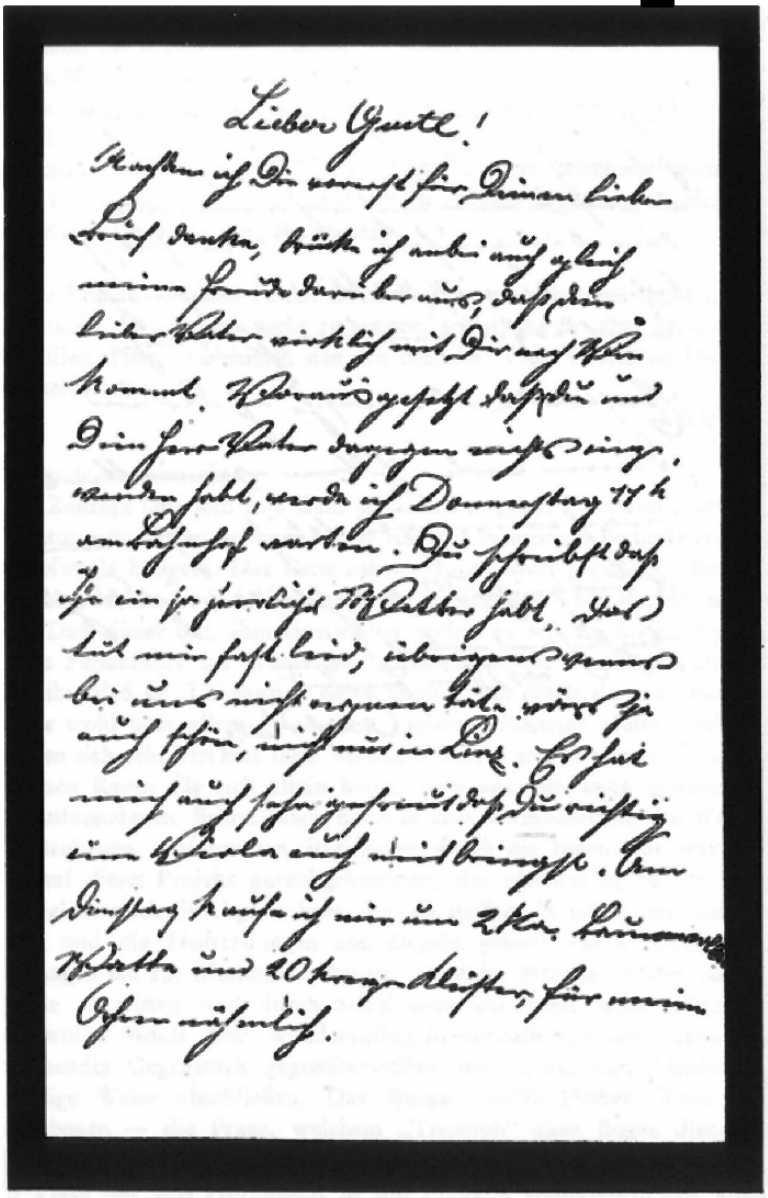
Since some things had remained unfinished for me in Vienna, I wrote to Adolf asking him to put these matters in order. Above all, my current contribution was to be paid to the treasurer of the Musicians' Association, Riedl. Furthermore, he was to pick up my membership book there and forward the magazines published by the Musicians' Association to me.

Adolf fulfilled my requests very conscientiously and sent me what I desired. On a postcard dated July 15, 1908, which shows the so-called Graben in the first district, he informed me of this. The text of this card reads:

> "Dear Gustl.
>
> Was at Riedl's 3 times and never met him; only Thursday evening was I able to pay him. My heartiest thanks for your letter and especially your card. It looks very prosaic, the fountain that is. Since your departure, I have been working very hard, often again until 2 or even 3 a.m. When I am leaving, I will write to you. I have no desire at all if my sister is coming too. By the way, it is not hot here now, it even rains here and there. Along with this, I am also sending you your newspapers as well as the little book. Many greetings to you and your esteemed parents from
>
> Adolf Hitler"

The fountain of which Adolf writes that it looks very "prosaic" had been set up in the Volksgarten. The sculpture that was to decorate it was by the sculptor Hanak and was called "Joy in Beauty," a designation that Adolf, in view of the sober objectivity of the representation, felt to be irony.

Interesting is the reference to his sister, meaning Angela Raubal.



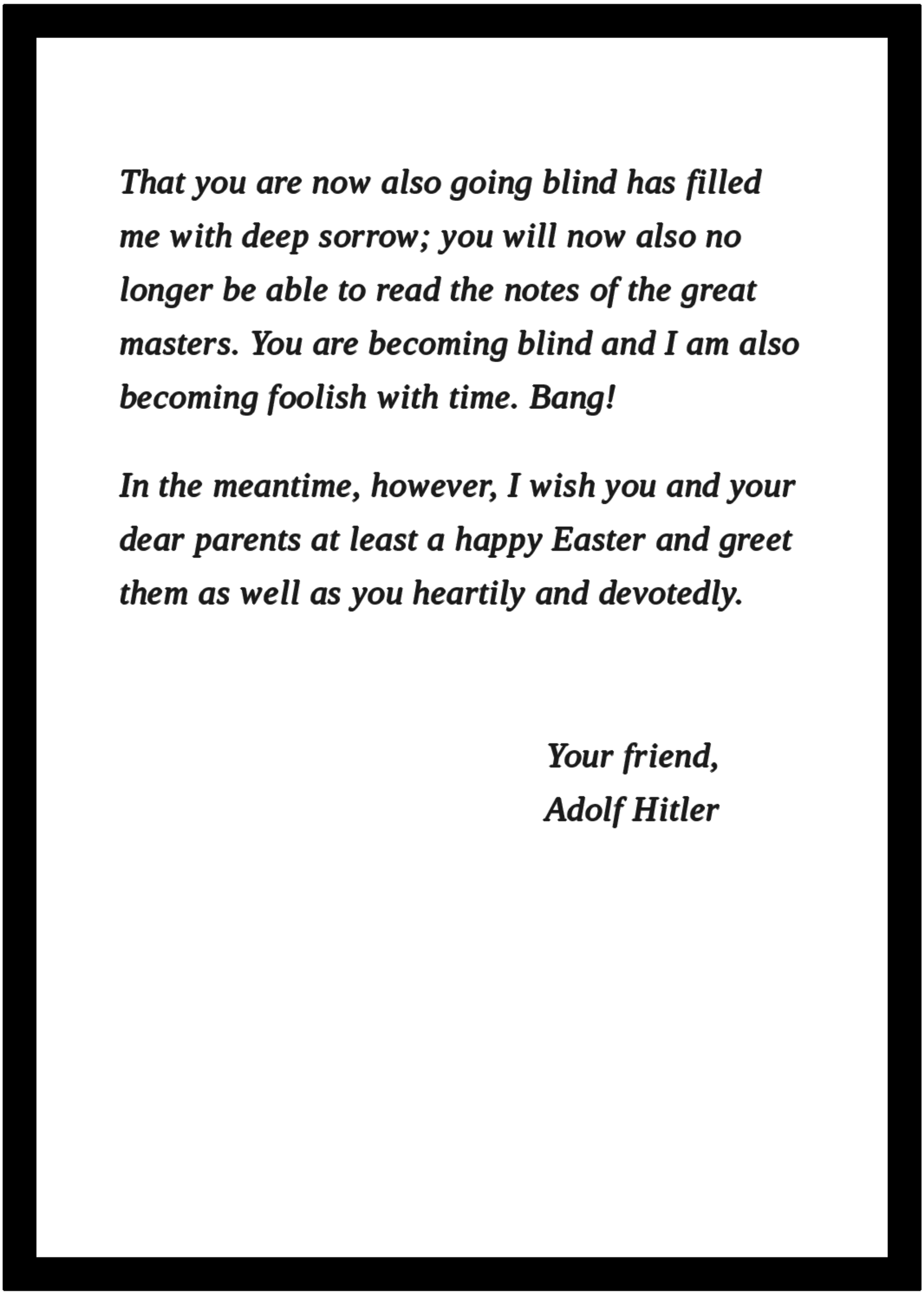
Lieber Gustl!

Nachdem ich Dir vorerst für Deinen lieben Brief danke, drücke ich aber auch gleich meine Freude darüber aus, daß Dein lieber Vater wirklich mit Dir nach Wien kommt. Vorausgesetzt daß Du und Dein Herr Vater dagegen nichts einzuwenden habt, werde ich Donnerstag 11h am Bahnhof warten. Du schreibst daß Ihr ein so herrliches Wetter habt, das tut mir fast leid; übrigens wenn es bei uns nicht regnen täte, wäre es auch schön, nicht nur in Linz. Es hat mich auch sehr gefreut daß Du richtig eine Viola auch mitbringst. Am Dienstag kaufe ich mir um 2 Kr. Leinwandwatte und 20 kreuz. Pflaster, für mein Ohren nämlich.

Dear Gustl!

While I thank you first for your kind letter, I would also like to express my joy that your dear father is really coming with you to Vienna. Provided that you and your Mr. Father have nothing against it, I will be picked up on Thursday at 11 o'clock. You write that you have such wonderful weather there, I am very sorry, by the way, it is also beautiful here with us, not only in Linz. I am also very happy that you are making such good progress in school. On Tuesday I will buy myself a 2 Kr. [Crown] linen map and 20 Kr. [Crown] of lead for my ears, namely.

Letter from Adolf Hitler to his friend, when the latter had traveled to Linz during the Easter holidays



That you are now also going blind has filled me with deep sorrow; you will now also no longer be able to read the notes of the great masters. You are becoming blind and I am also becoming foolish with time. Bang!

In the meantime, however, I wish you and your dear parents at least a happy Easter and greet them as well as you heartily and devotedly.

Your friend,
Adolf Hitler

Conclusion of the preceding letter

It was by no means pleasant for Adolf when Angela also went "up," by which Adolf meant "up" to the Waldviertel — for after his severe falling out with her husband, he no longer wanted to meet with her.

A few days later, another card arrived from Adolf, dated July 19, 1908, showing a view of the airship "Zeppelin," which at that time was considered a masterpiece of modern technology and, in a sense, a symbol of the future importance of aviation for humanity. This card has the following wording:

> *"Dear friend! My best thanks for your kindness. You do not need to send me butter and cheese now. I thank you sincerely, however, for the good will. Today Lohengrin, which I am attending. Many greetings to you and your esteemed parents from*
>
> Adolf Hitler"

In the margin it is noted:
"Mrs. Zakreys sends her thanks for the money and greets you and your parents."

I had told my mother how badly my friend was doing and that he was often hungry. That had been enough for my good mother. Without speaking about it, she sent Adolf food parcels several times during the summer of 1908. The fact that he asked her not to send anything for the time being was probably related to the planned holiday trip to the Waldviertel. But more important than all that for him was that he could see "Lohengrin." I felt completely with him there.

What was he probably working on now, alone in our room? My thoughts were very much occupied with him. Perhaps he took advantage of the fact that he now had the whole room to himself to resume his great architectural plans. For a long time, he had intended to remodel the Vienna Hofburg. On our forays through the inner city, he had repeatedly returned to this project, which was already finished in terms of ideas and only needed to be drawn out. It bothered him that the old Hofburg and the court stables were built of brick. In his eyes, bricks were an unsound material for monumental buildings. Therefore, these structures were to be demolished and replaced by stone buildings of a similar style. Furthermore, Adolf wanted to place a corresponding counterpart opposite the wonderful semicircular colonnade of the New Burg and thus close off the Heldenplatz in a unique way. The Burgtor was to remain. Two massive triumphal arches — Adolf had wisely left untouched the question of which "triumph" these arches were to serve — across the Ring were to incorporate the magnificent square with the court museums into the planning. The old court stables were torn down. In their place a magnificent building was to be placed there, equal to the Hofburg and linked to the entire complex by two further triumphal arches. In my friend's opinion, this would have provided Vienna with a square worthy of a world-class city.

But I had been mistaken. Adolf was not occupying himself with Vienna, but with Linz. Perhaps this was the best way for him to drown out every bitter feeling about his lost parental home and the homeland that had become foreign in his heart. Linz, where such terrible blows of fate had been dealt to him, was now to truly get to know his love.

A letter arrived, a rarity for Adolf, for he usually only wrote postcards, if only to save on postage. Although he absolutely does not know "what he can offer," he felt the urge to chat with me about his hermit life. The letter, dated July 21, 1908, reads in the original:

> "Dear Friend!
>
> You will perhaps have already wondered why I have not written for so long; The answer is very simple, I would not know of anything I could have offered you, and what would have particularly interested you. For now. I am still in Vienna, and am staying here too. Alone here, because Mrs. Zakreys is with her brother. Nevertheless, I am doing quite well in my hermit life. Only one thing is missing for me. Hitherto, Mrs. Zakreys always drummed me up in the morning, I always got up very early to work, whereas now I am dependent on myself. Is nothing new going on in Linz? One hears nothing at all from the Theater Building Society now. When the bank is completed, please send me a picture postcard. And now I have two more requests for you. First. If you would be so good and would buy me the "Guide through the Danube City Linz," not the Wöhrl, but the actual Linz one published by Krakowitzer. On the cover is a Linz woman, the background depicts Linz from the Danube side with the bridge and the castle. It costs sixty Heller, which I enclose for you in stamps. I ask you to send it to me immediately either prepaid or cash on delivery. I will reimburse you for the costs. But take care that the timetable of the Steamship Company, as well as the city map, is included. I need a few figures that I have forgotten, and which I cannot find in the Wöhrl. And secondly, I ask you that when you travel by ship again, you bring me such a guide as you had this year, the "at your pleasure" I will pay you. So please, you are so good, aren't you. I know nothing else new otherwise, except that this morning I caught a monstrous bedbug, which soon after swam dead in "my" blood, and that my teeth are now chattering from sheer "heat." I believe such cold days

will only be in a few summers, like this year. It's the same with you, isn't it? Now many greetings to you and your dear parents, and while repeating my requests, I remain your friend,

Adolf Hitler”

Adolf was so intensely occupied with his new reconstruction plans for Linz that he even enclosed sixty Heller in stamps with the letter from his meager money, so that I could obtain for him the city guide written by Krakowitzer. By "Bank," the building of the Bank of Upper Austria and Salzburg is meant. Adolf was very concerned whether this construction might disturb the unified impression offered by the Linz main square. That he waited with impatience for positive news from the Theater Building Association, I could understand, for the new construction of the Linz Theater, along with that of the Danube Bridge, was his favorite idea.

How conscientious Adolf was despite his own distress was proven not only by the enclosed amount for the city guide, but by the remark that he also wanted to compensate me accordingly for the travel guide that one received on the Danube ships and which had to be paid for "at one's discretion."

And, oh, the bedbugs! Malice of fate! I myself was almost immune to them, while Adolf was terribly tormented by them. How often, when I had slept through his nightly bedbug hunt, did he hold out specimens to me in the morning, carefully impaled on a needle. Incidentally, at that time very many Viennese apartments were infested with bedbugs. So once again a "massive beast" had to bite the dust!

For a long time I remained without news. But then — dated August 17, 1908 — came a delightful letter from Adolf, probably the most revealing one he wrote to me. It reads:

“Good Friend!

First, I ask your forgiveness for not writing a letter for so long. This also had its good, or rather bad reasons; I knew of nothing with which I could have served you. That I am now finally writing to you after all only proves that I had to search for a very long time to gather a few bits of news for you. So, I begin. Firstly, our landlady, the Zakreys, sends her best thanks for the money. And secondly, I thank you very much for your letter. The Zakreys would likely find writing difficult (she speaks German too poorly), which is why she asked me to convey her thanks to you and your dear parents. I have just now survived a severe bronchial catarrh. It seems to me your musicians' union is currently in a crisis.

Who actually published the newspaper that I sent you last time? I had already paid the amount long ago. Do you know any details? We have beautiful, pleasant weather here now; namely, it is raining very hard. And this year, in the year of the oven-heat, that is truly a blessing from heaven. Now, however, I will only enjoy it for a short time longer; I should probably leave on Saturday or Sunday. I will inform you exactly about it. I am writing quite a lot now, usually in the afternoons and evenings. Have you read the latest decision of the municipal council regarding the new theater? It seems to me they even want to patch up the old junk once more. But this won't work anymore because they wouldn't get permission from the authorities. — In any case, the whole phrase-mongering shows that these high-born gentlemen and all the most decisive factors have just as much of an idea about building a theater as a hippopotamus has about playing the violin. If my handbook of architecture didn't already look so miserable, I would very much like to pack it up and send it with the following address, in accordance with the theater-founding-association-draft-construction-execution-committee: "To the local high-born, strict, all-praiseworthy Comitoria for the eventual construction and possible furnishings..." And with that, I close for now. Greetings to you and your esteemed parents many times, and I remain your friend

Adolf Hitler”

That is Adolf, as he lives and breathes! Even the unusual salutation "Good Friend" proves that he was in an almost moved mood. Added to this is the long-winded introduction, which corresponds to that "run-up" so typical for him, which he also needed during his nightly speeches to get into full swing. The joke about the "pleasant rainy weather," which appears in another form already in the letter of April 20th of the same year, is warmed up again to loosen the still stubborn pen. First, our brave, so melodiously "Bohemian-accented" landlady gets a piece of his mind. Then Adolf falls upon the musicians' union. But these are all just skirmishes to sharpen the saber, for now he falls with all his inherent vehemence upon the Linz Theater Association, which cannot manage a new building but only wants to renovate the "old junk." With biting words, he falls upon these narrow-minded philistines who are ruining his favorite idea, which has occupied him for years. As I read this letter, I literally saw Adolf chasing back and forth between the door and the grand piano and blustering with tumbling words about these bureaucratic city councilors.

The journey announced in this letter actually took place, for already on August 20th, three days later, Adolf sent me from the Waldviertel...

a picture postcard of Weitra Castle. However, he does not seem to have felt very comfortable with his relatives, for shortly thereafter a card followed from Vienna, in which Adolf congratulated me on my name day.

So everything that had been agreed upon had happened. Mrs. Zakreys had been in Moravia, Adolf in the Waldviertel. While life in Stumpergasse returned to its usual track, I had to report, to my regret, on September 16th to the barracks of the k. k. Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 2. What I had to do in these eight weeks, or more correctly, what happened to me during the training period, I would rather pass over. These eight weeks form, so to speak, an absolutely empty space in my life. But even this time passed, and so I was finally able—it was around November 20th—to inform Adolf of my arrival in Vienna.

I had, as I wrote to Adolf, used the early train to gain time and arrived at the Westbahnhof as early as three o'clock in the afternoon. At the barrier, in the usual place, Adolf was supposed to be standing. He could then help me carry the heavy suitcase, which also contained a few things for him as a greeting from my mother. Had I overlooked him? I went back again. In any case, he was not standing at the barrier. I went into the waiting hall. I looked around in vain. Adolf was not there. Perhaps he had fallen ill. He had written to me in his last letter that his old ailment, bronchial catarrh, was tormenting him again. I left the suitcase in the luggage storage and hurried, very worried, to Stumpergasse. Mrs. Zakreys greeted me joyfully, but immediately added that the room had already been given away. "Yes, and Adolf, my friend?" I asked in astonishment.

Mrs. Zakreys looked at me from her wrinkled, creased face with wide eyes. "Why, don't you know that Mr. Hitler has moved out?"

No, I did not know that.

"Where has he moved to?" I wanted to know.

"Mr. Hitler did not say."

"But he must have left a message for me, a letter perhaps or a short note. How else am I to find him?"

The landlady shook her head. "No, Mr. Hitler left nothing behind."

"Not even a greeting?"

"He said nothing."

I asked Mrs. Zakreys if the rent had been paid properly. Adolf had conscientiously settled his share. Mrs. Zakreys gave me back the remainder due to me, as I had transferred the rent to her in advance until November. She was very sorry to lose us both. But on that point...

nothing would change. For the night, she put me up as a makeshift arrangement.

The next day, I looked for a new room. In the Glasauerhof on the outer Mariahilfer Straße, I found a nice, bright cabinet and rented a small upright piano.

Nevertheless, I missed Adolf very much. I was convinced that he would turn up at my place again one day. To make this easier for him, I left my new address with Mrs. Zakreys. There were now three ways for Adolf to find me immediately: either through Mrs. Zakreys, or through the secretariat of the Conservatory, or through my parents. Adolf would certainly use one of these ways if he wanted to join me again. That I could find him through the Central Registration Office of the Police Headquarters—of course, I did not think of that.

But days passed, the week passed, the next one—Adolf did not come. What had happened to him? Had something occurred between the two of us that had prompted him to part from me?

I went through the last weeks spent together in my thoughts. True, there had been differences of opinion and rows, but those were habitual things with Adolf. It had never been any different with him. As much as I tried to discover the reasons for his absence, I could not find the slightest cause for it. He himself had repeatedly spoken of the fact that we wanted to stay together again in the autumn when I returned to Vienna. Not with a single word had he hinted at a planned separation, not even in moments of visible annoyance. Our friendship had been forged so firmly during these four years that there was nothing to talk about. That was just as self-evident as the mutual intention to stick together in the future as well.

When I thought through the last weeks spent together, I had to realize, quite contrary to what I wanted to find, that our relationship with each other had been better than ever, more intimate, more essential; indeed, these last weeks in Vienna with so many wonderful experiences at the Opera, at the "Burg," with the adventurous trip to the Rax, represented the very pinnacle of our friendship.

What could have prompted Adolf to part from me without a greeting or a sign?

The more violently I racked my brains over it, the more I felt what Adolf had meant to me. I felt alone and abandoned, for through the constant memory of our friendship, I could not bring myself to seek connection elsewhere. Although I saw the advantages of this state for my studies, my...

whole life now seemed so ordinary and almost boring. Hearing beautiful performances in the concert hall and opera was certainly a comfort. But it was distressing not to be able to share such experiences with anyone. At every concert, every opera I attended, I hoped to see Adolf. Perhaps he would be standing at the exit after the performance, waiting for me, and I would hear his so familiar, impatient "Come on already, Gustl!"

But all hopes of seeing Adolf again were in vain. Meanwhile, one thing became clear to me: he did not want to return to me. It was no coincidence that he had separated from me, nor was it the expression of a passing whim or changing unfortunate circumstances. If he had wanted to find me, he certainly would have found me.

I was reluctant to break off a friendship that had meant so much to me without a sign of gratitude or continued connection. Therefore, the next time I traveled to see my parents in Linz, I went to see Mrs. Raubal in Bürgergasse to get his address from her.

She was home alone and received me with striking coolness. I asked where Adolf was living in Vienna now. She didn't know that herself, she replied brusquely; Adolf hadn't written to her at all anymore. So here, too, I stood before nothingness. When Mrs. Raubal began to reproach me, saying that through my artistic endeavors I was partly to blame for the fact that Adolf, now twenty years old, still had no profession and no livelihood, I explained my view on the matter and defended Adolf quite decisively, for Angela was only speaking what her husband thought. My opinion of him was no better than the opinion Adolf had of his brother-in-law. The conversation became increasingly unfriendly. I stood up and took my leave briefly.

The year passed without my having heard or seen anything of Adolf. It was only forty years later that I learned from that Linz archivist, who was involved in researching the biographical data of Adolf Hitler, that my friend had moved out of the apartment in Stumpergasse because the rent there had been too high for him, and had taken up quarters much more cheaply in a so-called "Men's Home" in Meldemannstraße in the twentieth district. Adolf had submerged into the darkness of the big city. For him, those years began of which he himself reported only little, for which there are no reliable witnesses, because one thing is certain for this most difficult phase of his life: he no longer had a friend.

Now I understood his behavior at that time. He no longer wanted to have a friend. Alone and lonely, he wanted to go his way and bear what fate imposed upon him. It was the path into solitude. I had experienced it myself after that separation, that a person is nowhere as lonely as in the midst of a large city.

And so our beautiful youth friendship came to a rather unpleasant conclusion. Yet, with time, I reconciled myself to it. Indeed, I found that this abrupt termination of our friendship, provoked by Adolf, was actually more meaningful than an end brought about by us becoming indifferent to one another or by me no longer meaning anything to Adolf. Certainly, such an end would have been harder for me to bear than that forced farewell, which was not really one at all. Since this separation occurred at a time when our friendship, at least in my view, had reached an almost ideal peak, the image of my friend also remained much more cohesive and vivid in my memory than if I could only see it through a farewell clouded by unfavorable accompanying circumstances. Surely, this is also part of the reason why these years of youth, lying so far in the past, have remained so present to me.

III

AFTERWORD

After an intensive four-year course of study at the Vienna Conservatory, I was engaged in October 1912 as the second conductor at the Municipal Theater in Marburg an der Drau and made my debut there as a conductor in Lortzing's "Der Waffenschmied." This first independent work gave me great joy. The city, although smaller than Linz, was very open to artistic performances. The Music Society and the Liedertafel choir willingly reinforced the forces available to me in the theater. I produced a number of good comic operas, of which Flotow's "Martha," above all, brought brilliant success. Visitors came to the city from the wide Styrian lowlands, a graceful landscape already radiant with the glow of the south, which I grew to love. After the end of the season, I moved with my orchestra to Bad Pystian to lead the spa music there throughout the summer. My engagement in Marburg continued into the next season. I had already settled in excellently in the cheerful little town. The universal approval I found boosted my youthful self-confidence and intensified my zeal. Then, after a premiere of "Eva," the director called me into his box and introduced me to the head of the Klagenfurt Municipal Theater, who was in search of an opera conductor. He was apparently so impressed by my performance that he engaged me on the spot for the next season. When I concluded my activities in Marburg in the early summer of 1914 to travel to my parents in Linz, I interrupted the journey in Klagenfurt and informed myself about my future sphere of activity. A good orchestra of forty men, a beautiful house, a modern stage, and moreover in the capital of Carinthia, a land famous for its high level of musicality. Here I could approach "Lohengrin," perhaps even "Die Meistersinger." What more could I want? Truly, for me, the heavens were already full of violins, literally speaking. But just as they were near fulfillment, my youthful dreams were scattered in the fire of Russian batteries when, a few months later, as a replacement reservist of the Imperial-Royal Landwehr Infantry Regiment No. 2, I experienced my baptism of fire on the battlefields of Galicia. That was a different kind of music than the one I had dreamed of. As little as I was suited for the soldier's trade, I nevertheless tried, just like all my other comrades, to do my duty. This attempt ended after the terrible Carpathian winter of 1915 in the poor field hospital of Eperjes in Hungary. When the seriously wounded and sick were brought from there on a gruesome seven-day journey to Budapest, and the dead were unloaded at every major station, I too had finished with my life and calculated at which station they would unload me. Yet, like a miracle, I survived all the pains and horrors of the transport. But my strength was broken forever.

When I finally recovered enough after months of infirmity to be able to visit my parents, I found everything changed at home as well. My father, exhausted by the hardships of work and cheated of the hope of his life—to be able to hand over the business he had built up alone to his only son—had given up the business in 1916 and bought a small agricultural property in Fraham near Eferding. In vain my father sought recovery there. While I went to the front for a second time, he died in September of the year 1918 amidst the sorrow and desolation of that time. How gladly I would have granted him a more beautiful sunset of his life!

I experienced the end of the war with a vehicle unit in Vienna, where I was demobilized on November 8, 1918. What was I to do now? My career prospects were zero. The provincial theaters remained closed. I went to Vienna to look for employment. The two state theaters were playing, but getting a position there was hopeless. The Tonkünstler Orchestra, in which I had earned my living as a violist for years during my studies, had been disbanded. What was left? Only dance orchestras in the large coffee houses. No, that was not for me. For a while, I worked as a conductor in one of the new cinemas and led the six-man orchestra that had to "provide musical accompaniment" to silent films, an occupation that did not suit me at all. I tried to find a position as a violist or at least to obtain some substitute work. In vain! No one was interested in private tutoring either.

I was at my wit's end. Then a letter arrived from my mother. She wrote to me that the position of a municipal secretary was being advertised in the town of Eferding. But because she, as a mother, knew her son very well, she also knew how she could make this offer, which in itself was not very tempting, palatable to him. She had described my musical abilities to the mayor and now added that it was hoped the future municipal secretary would reorganize the music association, which had disbanded, and take over its leadership.

I went home and looked into the matter. The pay was low, and the artistic possibilities seemed very modest. But in the meantime, I had finally given up the idea of becoming a professional conductor. So, primarily for my mother's sake, I wrote the application. Then I traveled back to Vienna, still hoping to find a position in an orchestra. There, in January of 1920, I received the notification from the mayor that the municipal committee had selected me for the position of municipal secretary among 38 applicants. With that, I had become a civil servant.

Gradually, I found my way into this work and, a few years later, passed the examination as a municipal official with the Upper Austrian provincial government. As modest as this existence was, it still allowed me time to live out my musical inclinations. I built up an orchestra that was quite respectable. Soon, musical life in the small town took an encouraging upturn. From the contemplative domestic music of a string quartet to the plaza concerts of the brass choir and the festival performances of the choral society, there was beautiful, successful work for me.

For all these years, I had been unable to learn anything more about my childhood friend, who had left me in such a strange way. Eventually, I had given up the search. Furthermore, I really wouldn't have known how I could find out anything about him. My brother-in-law Raubal had long since died. Angela, his sister, no longer lived in Linz. What might have become of my friend? I was convinced that he was a better soldier than I was. Perhaps, like so many young men of our age, he had fallen?

Every now and then, I heard people talk about a German politician named Adolf Hitler. But I thought it must be a man who happened to have the same name. After all, the name Hitler was not all that rare. If I were ever to hear anything of my former childhood friend again, I assumed it would most likely be the news that he had become a significant architect, or at least an artist, but certainly not some insignificant politician, of all places in Munich.

Then, one evening, I was walking across our quiet town square and stopped in front of the bookstore without any particular intention. There, the "Münchner Illustrierte" was on display. The cover photo showed a man in his mid-thirties with narrow, pale features—I recognized him at first glance. That was Adolf. He had hardly changed. I reckoned back the time—fifteen years! To me, this countenance appeared perhaps sterner, more masculine, more mature, but not significantly older.

Under the picture it read: "The well-known mass orator of the

National Socialists, Adolf Hitler." So my friend was indeed identical to that much-mentioned politician. I regretted very much that he had been as unable as I to complete his artistic career. I knew all too well what it meant to bury all one's hopes and dreams. Now he had to earn his living as a public speaker. A bitter bread, although he was in himself a good, persuasive speaker. I had experienced that often enough. I could also understand his interest in politics. But politics was a matter as dangerous as it was thankless. I was glad that, by virtue of my professional position as a municipal official alone, I was obliged to remain outside of daily political events, for as the now definitive head of the city office, I had to dedicate myself to all community residents in the same way. My friend, however, sailed into politics with full sails, and it did not surprise me at all that his impetuous urging, which I read about in the newspapers, ended with imprisonment in Landsberg.

But he came back. The press concerned itself with him more than ever. His political ideas, which gradually found followers in Austria as well, did not surprise me in the least, for they were basically the same thoughts that he had presented to me in Vienna, albeit still somewhat confused and exaggerated. When I read his speeches, I could literally see him before me, pacing up and down in the stifling room of the rear building at Stumpergasse 29 between the door and the grand piano, talking to me incessantly. Back then, I was his only listener. Now thousands might listen to him. His name was mentioned everywhere. People were already asking: where does this Hitler come from?

Well, I could perhaps tell more about that than many others. Did I not still have letters and drawings from him? I had completely forgotten about them. Now I went up to the attic. There still stood the old, wooden-built trunk that had remained with my parents and had come to my Eferding city apartment via the small house in Fraham when my mother, on my advice, had sold the small property and moved in with me. I searched for the key, finally found it, and unlocked the trunk. And indeed, there lay a large blue envelope on which the name "Adolf Hitler" was written in my hand. I could no longer remember this envelope. In the terrible events of the war, in the misery of the post-war period, I had completely forgotten about it, just as my friend himself would have gradually become distant to me if he had not emerged as a politician.

I opened the envelope. Correspondence cards, letters, drawings by my childhood friend, certainly only a part of what I had received from him. But at least some things that were quite remarkable. I read his letters and cards again. What was I to do with them? Send him all this correspondence? Why, actually? He had other things to do now than to refresh old childhood memories. Perhaps he had long ago forgotten the slender, music-loving upholsterer's assistant whom he had met at the time in the standing area of the Linz City Theater. Should I write to him? That too seemed superfluous to me, for since he had already mocked my lack of interest in politics back then, he would probably be even more disappointed in me now.

So I contented myself with following the further fate of my childhood friend through the newspapers. His followers already numbered in the millions. Without setting foot on Austrian soil, he brought excitement and unrest even to our diminished Austria with his radical views and ideas—all the more reason for me to hold back.

It may seem incomprehensible that after Adolf had made a name for himself as a politician, I did not immediately get in touch with my childhood friend. And yet, looking back, I must state: since our childhood friendship was rooted in a shared artistic endeavor and political questions were far from my mind, I no longer felt drawn to Adolf, to whom I could offer absolutely nothing in his field of interest.

Then, on January 30, 1933, the news reached me that Adolf Hitler had become Reich Chancellor. Involuntarily, I remembered that midnight experience on the Freinberg, during which Adolf had described to me how he, like Rienzi, wanted to rise to become a tribune of the people. What the sixteen-year-old had seen then in visionary ecstasy had now become reality. So I sat down and wrote a few lines to the "Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler in Berlin."

I expected no answer to my writing. A Reich Chancellor had more important things to do than to answer the letter of a certain August Kubizek in Eferding near Linz, with whom he had been friends a quarter of a century ago. But it seemed to me, quite apart from politics, a duty of decency to congratulate him on the position he had achieved as a childhood friend.

To my great surprise, however, I received the following letter one day:

„To Mr.
Municipal Office Director Aug. Kubizek,
Eferding/Upper Austria.

Adolf Hitler Munich, August 4, 1933
Brown House

My dear Kubizek!

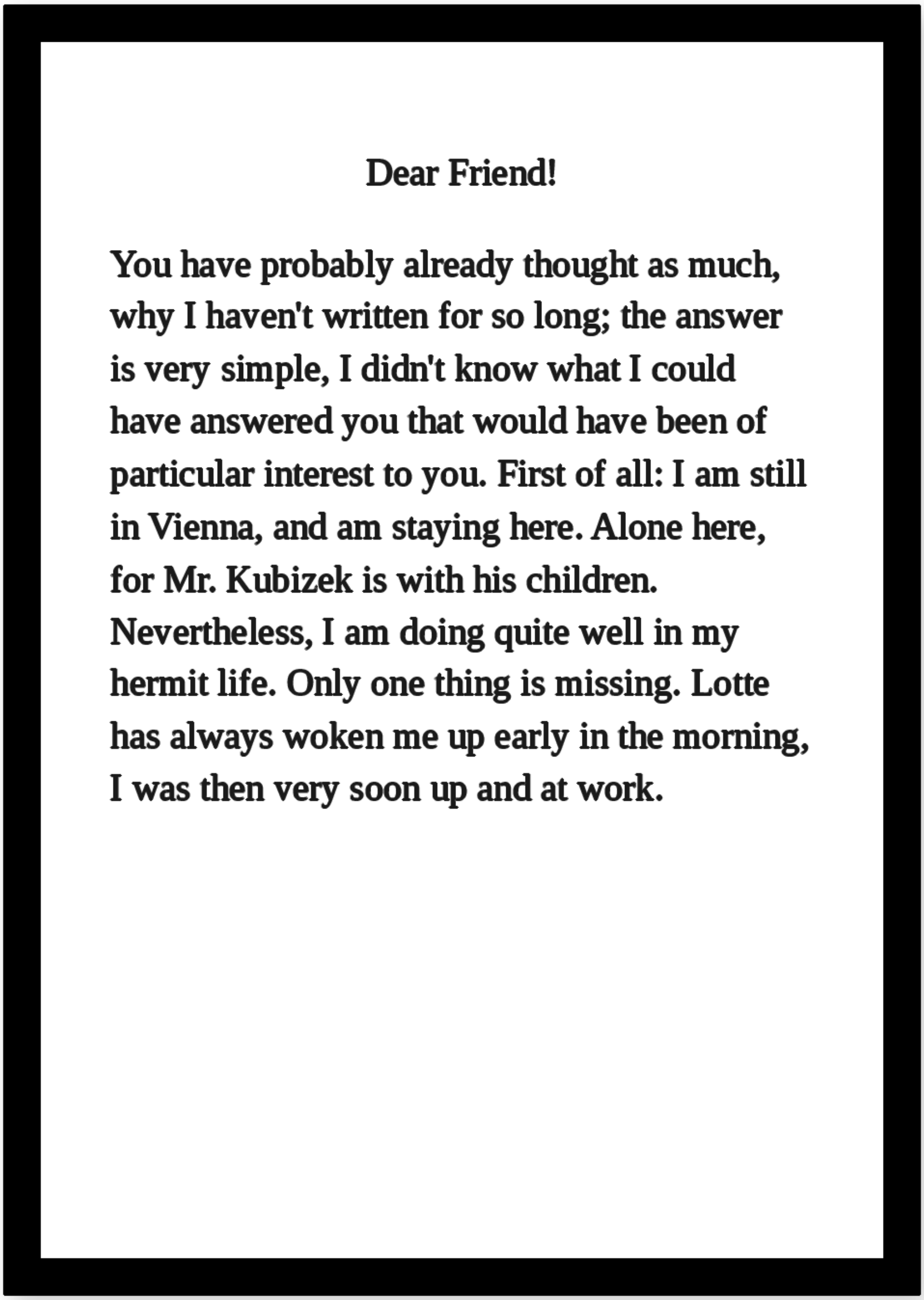
Only today was your letter of February 2nd presented to me. Given the hundreds of thousands of letters I have received since January, it is not surprising. All the greater was my joy to receive news of your life and your address for the first time after so many years. I would very much like — once the time of my hardest struggles is over — to personally revive the memory of those most beautiful years of my life. Perhaps it would be possible for you to visit me. Wishing you and your mother all the best, I remain, in memory of our old friendship,

Yours,

Adolf Hitler m. p.”

So he had not forgotten me after all. That he remembered me despite his grueling activity pleased me immensely. He called the years we had spent together "the most beautiful years" of his life. So he had already forgotten the bitter hardship that accompanied them. Only youth with its storm and stress warmed his heart. But the end of the letter put me in a state of embarrassment. "Perhaps it would be possible for you to visit me," he wrote. That was easier said than done. I couldn't just drive to the Obersalzberg and say, "Here I am." Besides, this reunion would only have caused him embarrassment. What could I tell him? My own fate, measured against his, was trivial and uninteresting. Reporting from Eferding would only bore him. And otherwise, I had experienced nothing. So I let the matter rest and convinced myself that this friendly invitation should only be seen as an act of formal politeness, just as he, exactly as twenty-five years ago, had not forgotten to greet my parents, which now meant only my mother, at the end of the letter. It does have its good points when a friend is so incredibly consistent.

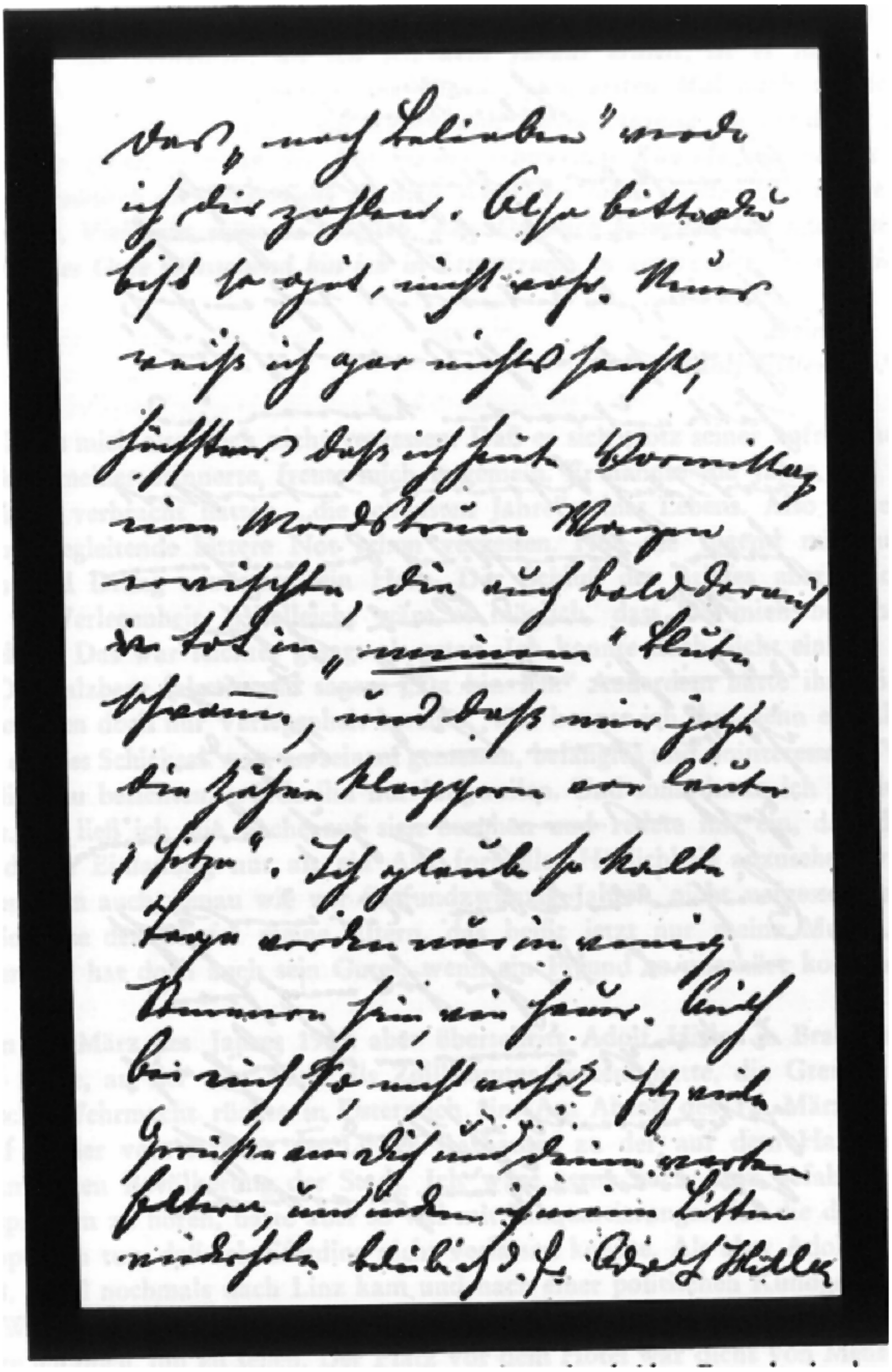
On March 12th of the year 1938, however, Adolf Hitler crossed the border in Braunau at the very spot where his father had served as a customs official. The German Wehrmacht marched into Austria. On the evening of March 12th, Adolf Hitler spoke from the balcony of the Linz City Hall to the population of the city gathered in the main square. I would have liked to go to Linz to hear him speak, but I had so much to do with billeting for the German troops that I could not leave Eferding. But when Adolf Hitler came to Linz again on April 8th and, after a political rally in the workshop of the Krauß locomotive factory, at the Hotel



Dear Friend!

You have probably already thought as much, why I haven't written for so long; the answer is very simple, I didn't know what I could have answered you that would have been of particular interest to you. First of all: I am still in Vienna, and am staying here. Alone here, for Mr. Kubizek is with his children. Nevertheless, I am doing quite well in my hermit life. Only one thing is missing. Lotte has always woken me up early in the morning, I was then very soon up and at work.

Letter from Adolf Hitler to his friend, who had returned to his parents in Linz during the summer holidays



das „nach belieben“ würde
ich dir zahlen. Also bitte du
bist so gut, nicht wahr. Nun
weiß ich gar nichts Neues,
höchstens daß ich heut Vormittag
einen Mordstrum Wanzen
erwischte, die auch bald darauf
die toten in „meinem“ Blute
schwammen, und daß mir jetzt
die Zähne klappern vor „lauter
Hitze“. Ich glaube so kalte
Tage werden nur in wenig
Sommern sein wie heuer. Auch
bei Euch so nicht anders? Schöne
Grüße an Dich und deine werten
Eltern, und indem ich meine Bitte
wiederhole bleib ich D. F. Adolf Hitler

Typical excerpt from the correspondence between the two friends, in which Hitler describes his struggle against the bedbugs in their shared housing.

Weinzinger got off, I still tried to see him. The square in front of the hotel was densely surrounded by people. I worked my way through the crowd to the line of guards and told the SA men that I wanted to speak to the Reich Chancellor. They initially looked at me strangely and certainly took me for a madman. Only when I showed the men one of Hitler's letters did they become suspicious and called an officer over. When he too had seen the letter, he let me in immediately and led me into the lobby of the hotel. There, however, it was like a swarm of bees. Generals stood together in groups waiting and discussing the events. State ministers, who were known to me through the illustrated magazines, high party leaders, and other uniformed men came and went. Adjutants, recognizable by their shiny shoulder cords, rushed busily past. And all this exciting activity revolved around the same man whom I also wanted to speak to. My head began to swim, and I realized that my undertaking was senseless. I had to accept the fact that my former childhood friend had now become Reich Chancellor and that this highest position he held in the state had created an insurmountable distance between us. The years when I had been the only person to whom he had dedicated his friendship and entrusted the most personal matters of his heart were simply over for good. The best thing, therefore, was if I quietly made my getaway and no longer stood in the way of these high gentlemen who surely had significant missions.

One of the influential adjutants, it was Albert Bormann, to whom I had entrusted my request, came back to me after some time and told me that the Reich Chancellor was a little ill and would not receive anyone else today. I should come back tomorrow around noon. Bormann then invited me to take a seat for a moment, as he wanted to ask me a few things. Whether the Chancellor had always gone to sleep so late in his youth, he inquired with an accusing voice. He said he never went to bed before midnight and then slept far into the morning, while his entourage, who had to do the same as the Chancellor in the evening, had to be on their feet early the next day. Furthermore, Bormann complained about Hitler's outbursts of anger, which no one could face, and about the Chancellor's peculiar diet, which consisted of meatless food, pastries, and fruit juices. Had the Chancellor also kept to this in his youth?

I affirmed, but pointed out that at that time he still liked to eat meat. With that, I took my leave. This Albert Bormann was a brother of the well-known Reichsleiter Martin Bormann.

The next day I drove back to Linz. The whole city was on its feet. People crowded all the streets. The closer I got to the Hotel Weinzinger, the denser the crowd became. Finally, I had fought my way through to the hotel and once again took my place in the background of the lobby. The excitement and bustle were even greater than the day before. After all, today was the day before the plebiscite scheduled for Austria.

It was only natural that all the major decisions were concentrated around the person of Hitler. In any case, I could not have found a more unfavorable time for this reunion than this one. I calculated. At the beginning of July 1908, we had said our goodbyes in the hall of the Westbahnhof. Today was April 9, 1938. So almost exactly thirty years lay between that unexpected separation in Vienna and today's encounter, if it were to take place at all. Thirty years — a whole lifetime! And what revolutionary events these thirty years had brought.

I harbored no illusions about what would happen if Hitler wanted to see me at all. A brief handshake, perhaps a familiar slap on the shoulder, a few cordial words hastily spoken in passing — I had to be reasonably content with that. I had also already prepared a few appropriate words. The form of address caused me some concern. I could not possibly address the Reich Chancellor as "Adolf." I knew how painfully he took any breach of protocol. It was best to stick to the generally prescribed form of address. But God knows if I would even get around to reciting the prepared "speech."

What then took place is, understandably, heavily crowded with emotional moments in my memory.

When Hitler suddenly stepped out of one of the rooms of the Hotel Weinzinger, he recognized me immediately and with the delighted exclamation: "Gustl!" he left his entourage behind and took me by the arm. I also still remember how he clasped and held my right hand, which I extended to him, with both of his hands, and how his eyes, which were as bright and piercing as ever, looked at me. Like me, he was also visibly moved. I could hear it in the sound of his voice.

The dignified men in the lobby looked at each other in astonishment. No one knew this strange civilian whom the Führer and Reich Chancellor greeted with a warmth that many surely envied me for at that moment.

Then I finally regained my composure and spoke the prepared words. He listened attentively and smiled a little. When I had finished, he nodded to me as if he wanted to say: "Well learned, Gustl" or perhaps even "Now my childhood friend also speaks to me just as everyone else speaks to me." To me, however, any familiarity originating from my side seemed improper.

After a short pause, he said to me: "Come!" Perhaps with my rehearsed address, I had forfeited that "Du" [informal you] which he had struck in his letter from the year 1933. But, to be honest, I was relieved when I heard the "Sie" [formal you].

The Reich Chancellor walked ahead of me to the lift. We rode to the second floor of the hotel, where his living quarters were located. The personal adjutant opened the door. We entered. The adjutant left. We were alone. Once again, Hitler took my hand, looked at me for a long time and said: "You have remained exactly as you were then, Kubizek. I would have recognized you anywhere immediately. You haven't changed, you've only grown older."

Then he led me to the table and invited me to take a seat. He assured me how much he rejoiced to see me again after such a long time. He was particularly pleased by my congratulations, for I knew best how difficult his path had been. The current moment was admittedly unfavorable for a longer discussion, but he hoped that an opportunity for it would present itself in the future. He would have me notified of it. Writing directly to him would not be advisable, because the mail addressed to him often does not even reach his hands, as it must be processed beforehand to relieve him of the burden.

"I no longer have a private life like I did then and cannot do what I want like every other person."

With these words, he stood up and stepped to the window, which offered a view of the Danube. The old lattice girder bridge was still standing there, about which he had already been annoyed in his boyhood years. As expected, he immediately began to speak of it.

"That ugly footbridge!" he exclaimed, "it is still standing there. But not for much longer, I tell you that, Kubizek."

With that, he turned back to me and smiled. "Nevertheless, I would like to stroll across the old bridge with you once more. But that is no longer possible, because wherever I appear, everyone is after me. But believe me, Kubizek, I still have a great deal planned for Linz."

No one knew that better than I. As expected, he presented all the plans again that had occupied him in his youth, as if not thirty, but at most three years had passed in the meantime.

Shortly before he had received me, he had driven through the city to inform himself about the structural changes. Now he went through the individual plans. The new Danube bridge, which [was to bear] the name...

"Nibelungen Bridge" was to lead, it had to be a masterpiece. He described to me in detail the design of the two bridgeheads. Then he spoke — I knew the sequence in advance — of the Landestheater, which was first to receive a modern stage. When the new opera house, which is to take the place of the ugly railway station, is finished, the theater will only be used for plays and operettas. Furthermore, Linz needs a modern concert hall if it is to deserve the name of a Bruckner city. "I want Linz to achieve a leading position in cultural matters, and I will create the conditions for it."

I thought that would end the interview. But Hitler now came to speak about the formation of a large symphony orchestra for Linz, and with that, the conversation suddenly took a personal turn.

"What have you actually become, Kubizek?"

I told him that I had been a municipal official since 1920, currently in the position of a city office director. "City office director," he asked, "what is that?"

Now I was embarrassed. How should I explain in a few words what was to be understood by this position. I searched my vocabulary for suitable expressions. Then he interrupted me.

"So you have become an official, a clerk! That doesn't suit you at all. Where have your musical abilities gone?"

I answered truthfully that the lost war had completely thrown me off track. If I did not want to starve, I had to change careers.

He nodded seriously and then said: "Yes, the lost war." Then he looked at me and said: "You will not end your service as a municipal clerk, Kubizek." Moreover, he wanted to see this Eferding for himself, which I had told him about.

I asked him if he was serious.

"Of course I'm coming to see you, Kubizek," he declared, "but my visit is for you alone. Then we will wander down to the Danube once again. I don't get around to it here, because here they won't let me be."

He wanted to know if I still practiced music as diligently as I did then.

Now I came to my favorite subject, and I told him in detail about the musical life in our small town. I feared that in view of the world-shaking problems he had to decide, my report would bore him. But I was mistaken. If I mentioned some things only summarily to save time, he immediately interrupted me.

"What, Kubizek, you even perform symphonies in this little Eferding! That is magnificent. Which symphonies have you performed there?"

I listed them: Schubert's "Unfinished", Beethoven's Third, Mozart's Jupiter Symphony, Beethoven's Fifth.

He wanted to know the strength and composition of my orchestra, was amazed at my information, and congratulated me on my successes.

"Then I must help you, Kubizek," he cried, "put together a report for me and tell me what you are lacking. And how are you doing personally? You aren't suffering any hardship, are you?"

I answered him that my position enabled a modest but thoroughly satisfactory existence and that I therefore had no personal wishes.

He looked up in surprise. He did not seem accustomed to someone having no wishes to put forward.

"Do you have children, Kubizek?"

"Yes, three sons!"

"Three sons," he cried, moved. He repeated this word several times and with a very serious countenance. "You have three sons, Kubizek. I have no family. I am alone. But I would like to look after your sons."

I had to tell him about my sons in detail. He wanted to know every particular. He was pleased that all three were musically gifted and that two of them were also skilled draftsmen.

"I will take over the sponsorship for the education of your three sons, Kubizek," he declared to me, "I do not want young, gifted people to have to follow the same path in life that we did. You know what we went through in Vienna. But for me, the worst times only came after our paths had separated. It must no longer happen that a young talent perishes out of necessity. Where I can personally help, I will help, especially when it concerns your children, Kubizek!"

I want to add here at once that the Reich Chancellor did indeed have the costs of the musical education of my three sons at the Linz Bruckner Conservatory paid for through his office, and by his order, the drawings of my son Rudolf were appraised by an academy professor in Munich.

I had expected a fleeting handshake, and now we had actually been sitting together for over a full hour.

The Reich Chancellor rose. I thought the interview was now at an end and rose likewise. But he only called in his adjutant and gave him the orders regarding my sons. In doing so, the latter drew attention to the letters I still possessed from my youth.

Now I had to spread out letters, postcards, and drawings on the table. His astonishment was great when he saw the rather considerable number of my mementos. He wanted to know how these documents had been preserved. I told him about the black-painted trunk in the attic with the compartment in the lid and the envelope labeled "Adolf Hitler." He examined the watercolor of the Pöstlingberg with particular care. He explained to me that there were some clever painters who could copy his watercolors so accurately that they could no longer be distinguished from the original. These people carried on a brisk trade and found fools everywhere who fell for their swindle. It would be safest not to let the original out of one's hands at all.

Since someone had already tried to take the material from me, I asked the Reich Chancellor for his view on the matter. "These documents are your sole property, Kubizek," he replied to me, "no one can dispute your ownership of them."

Then he came to speak about the book by Rabitsch. Rabitsch had attended the Linz Realschule a few years after Hitler and had certainly written a book about his school days with the best of intentions. But Hitler was very angry about it because Rabitsch had not known him personally at all. "You see, Kubizek, I was not in agreement with this book from the start. Only someone who really knew me should write about me. If anyone is considered for that, it is you, Kubizek," and turning to his adjutant, he added: "Make a note of that immediately."

With that, he took my hand again. "You see, Kubizek, how necessary it is that we speak to each other more often. As soon as it is possible, I will call for you again."

The meeting was over; I left the hotel as if in a daze. —

The following period brought unrest into my quiet, secluded existence, and I had to discover that it was by no means always just beautiful and good to be the childhood friend of such a famous man. Although I myself had hardly told anyone about it and continued to practice the greatest restraint in the future, I soon got to know the dark sides of my childhood friendship with Hitler. I had already received a foretaste of what awaited me in the days of March. Austria had hardly been incorporated into the German Reich when a car drove up in front of my house in Eferding. The three uniformed gentlemen who stepped out of the car came directly from Berlin to see me. On behalf of the Führer, they were to take over all the documents from the Führer's youth in my possession so that they could be kept in a safe place in the Reich Chancellery. Fortunately, I did not let myself be bluffed. As I was now able to determine, Hitler had at that time, since this seizure had been staged, had no knowledge of my mementos at all. Rather, it was an unauthorized action by some party office that had learned my name. In any case, I refused to hand over the documents to the three SS men, which they absolutely could not understand. Apparently, they had expected more submissive people in Austria than I was. Their brash appearance did not make the desired impression on me. And yet this recalcitrant civilian was not even a party member, they surely thought as they had to drive away again empty-handed. Strange, what odd characters the Führer has chosen as childhood friends.

It was good that I had remained firm during this first attack. Future ones were easier to parry, for I could invoke Hitler's word that these documents were my personal property.

In the period that followed, the various party offices tried to outdo one another with me. Hitler had, as I now learned, occasionally pointed to me when the conversation turned to his youth memories in the circle of his trusted associates. "Ask Gustl!" was the stereotypical answer to all questions revolving around certain youth experiences. Thus, those in his immediate surroundings gradually became aware of this strange man who was still living somewhere in Austria without making a special fuss about his childhood friendship with Adolf Hitler. But now this "Gustl," who had hitherto remained more or less unreachable, had suddenly become a German citizen by way of the *Anschluss* of Austria to the German Reich and was readily accessible to all offices.

Reich Minister Goebbels sent a very sympathetic young man as his representative to me. His name was Karl Cerff; I no longer remember his rank or official position. Cerff explained to me that they were planning the publication of a major biography of the Führer, for which I was to work on the period from 1904 to 1908. I would be called to Berlin as soon as the time was right, so that I could carry out this task there, supported by recognized experts. In the meantime, I should begin with a detailed written record of my memories. I explained to the young man that I had absolutely no time for that now, because since the *Anschluss* there was an unheard-of amount of work for us municipal officials. He understood well that I did not want to be tied down and was very amused by my remarks. Finally, however, he exhorted me not to underestimate my "unique historical responsibility before history," as he put it. If I wished, he could easily obtain a leave of absence for me. This, however, I declined entirely decidedly. Thus he took his leave with the remark that he would return at a "better hour." However, since the further future brought only "worse" hours, I never saw Karl Cerff again. In any case, he tried to carry out his delicate mission with understanding and charm.

Much more persistent and unpleasant were the orders that reached me from Martin Bormann, who apparently felt solely responsible for me and my task and anxiously watched to ensure that no one else came into contact with me. His correspondence and orders sounded as if he had leased Adolf Hitler's life for himself and no one was allowed to say or write a word about it without his prior assessment and approval. When his attempt to secure the documents in my possession for the Party Chancellery — "the place where they belong," as he wrote — had failed, I received the strict order never to let these documents out of my hands without his permission and also not to grant any unauthorized person insight into them. Well, Martin Bormann did not need to urge me to do that. That was my own intention. But when he had the order conveyed to me to immediately write down my youth memories with Adolf Hitler and submit the draft to him, I sent word to him that I would first have to speak with Hitler himself about it. This method had a resounding success. If in the future I was put under pressure by one of those somewhat violent gentlemen, I only needed to say: "Forgive me, please. But I would like to speak with the Reich Chancellor personally about your proposals first. What was your esteemed name again?" Then the mood would flip to the opposite, and I was treated as cautiously and sensitively as a raw egg.

On the other hand, I think with pleasure of my meeting with Rudolf Hess. He had come to Linz and asked me to see him. A car sent to meet me brought me to the Bergbahnhotel on the Pöstlingberg. Reich Minister Hess greeted me extremely warmly. "So this is the Kubizek!" he cried out radiantly, "the Führer has already told me so much about you." I felt immediately that this warmth was genuine and really came from the heart. I also found a certain experience confirmed by this visit. The closer a personality stood to the Chancellor, the more the latter had told about me in that particular case. Rudolf Hess and Mrs. Winifred Wagner were the best informed about Hitler's youthful years and thus also about me. The Minister invited me to dine. We ate on the magnificent terrace of the hotel. After the meal, I had to tell him at length and in detail about my memories. Again and again, he threw in questions and remarks. I had the impression that Rudolf Hess, taken purely humanly, was closer to Hitler than many others, and I was happy about it. The other gentlemen sitting at the table also joined in the conversation. A cheerful, informal conversation ensued, which differed significantly from the negotiations with representatives of the Party Chancellery. I found it particularly delightful that from this wonderful spot high above the city, I could show the Reich Minister the location of all the details directly in the cityscape. There, behind the green hill with the powder tower, lay Leonding; one could precisely follow the school route of the former high school student. There lay Humboldtstrasse, where Mrs. Hitler had moved after the death of her husband, and directly at our feet lay lovely Urfahr with Blütengasse and other memorial sites significant to my childhood friend.

Rudolf Hess, in his simple, modest manner, which differed so significantly from the behavior of other, much less significant political personalities, left a good impression on me. I only regretted that he appeared to be ill, as he looked very sickly.

In the meantime, people in my homeland itself had also become aware of me, after nothing had been known in Upper Austria until then about the existence of a childhood friend of Adolf Hitler, a circumstance that had made me happy for a long time. Now, I had been discovered. Although I was still not a party member, which many could not understand, because in their view, Hitler's childhood friend should actually have been party member number two. But even then, I had been a highly doubtful follower of my friend in political matters, not exactly because I would have rejected his views on politics entirely, but more because they did not interest me, or rather, because I did not understand them.

Naturally, I was soon asked for help and intercession by people who, for whatever reason, had fallen into distress. I was happy to help, although I had no illusions about my actual influence on political decisions. I also soon had to learn that being a "childhood friend of Adolf Hitler" did not yet constitute legitimacy for effective intervention. Where I did not succeed in reaching Hitler himself, I was made aware, as kindly as I was firmly, that I was not responsible for this or that matter.

As I had expected, Hitler's planned visit to Eferding did not take place.

Into this somewhat resigned mood, carried more by reason than by emotion, a registered letter from the Reich Chancellery arrived entirely unexpectedly. With a beating heart, I opened the envelope. There it stood...

solemnly printed on the finest handmade paper, which became the greatest joy of my entire life. By order of the Reich Chancellor, I was invited to participate in this year's Richard Wagner Festival in Bayreuth. I was to report to Mr. Kannenberg at Wahnfried House on Tuesday, July 25, 1939.

What I had hardly dared to dream of in my entire life now became a reality. I cannot describe the extent of my joy in words. It had always been my highest artistic longing to make a pilgrimage to Bayreuth and to experience a performance of the great master's music dramas there. But I was not wealthy and, given my modest existence, could never think of such a trip. And suddenly all of that became real and true.

I lived through the days before my departure as if in a fever and could almost no longer sleep for joy in the nights before. Then I traveled via Passau, Regensburg, and Nuremberg to Bayreuth. When I saw the hill with the Festival House for the first time from the train, I thought I would perish with joy and happiness. Mr. Kannenberg received me extremely kindly and assigned me a beautiful lodging with a family named Moschenbach at Lisztstraße 10. I arrived punctually for the performance. The 1939 Festival opened with "The Flying Dutchman." I took my seat. The lights went out. From the depths of the sunken and therefore invisible orchestra, the overture rang out, indescribably beautiful. My God, that I was allowed to experience this! An orchestra of 132 men! I was as if enchanted.

"The Flying Dutchman" was followed the next day by "Tristan and Isolde," an unforgettable performance. On Thursday, July 27, the sacred stage festival play "Parsifal" was staged. I had already prepared myself for it particularly well at home, worked through the piano score, and studied the relevant literature. When the Last Supper motif in C major sounded softly from the depths of the orchestra, the world around me was transformed, and I experienced the most blissful hours of my earthly existence.

With "Götterdämmerung" on Wednesday, August 2, 1939, my festival days in Bayreuth came to an end. I prepared for my departure and went once more to Mr. Kannenberg to thank him for the attentive care. "Do you really have to go home already," he asked with a meaningful smile, "it might be good if you were to add one more day." I understood his allusion immediately and stayed in Bayreuth for another day on August 3.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, an SS officer came to my quarters to pick me up. It was not far to the "Wahnfried" house. In the vestibule of the house, Obergruppenführer Julius Schaub awaited me and led me into

...a larger hall, in which numerous personalities were present, whom I knew either from Linz or from pictures in illustrated magazines. There stood Frau Winifred Wagner in animated conversation with Reich Minister Heß. Obergruppenführer Brückner was speaking with Herr von Neurath and some generals. In general, there were many military personnel in the room, and it flashed through my mind like lightning that the general situation was very tense, especially towards Poland, and that from time to time there was talk of an armed decision. I felt very out of place in this atmosphere charged with high tension, and that anxious feeling, similar to stage fright at the conductor's podium, which had already seized me in the lobby of the Hotel Weinzinger, took hold of me again. Probably the Reich Chancellor wanted to say a few kind words to me before he returned to the Reich capital. With a pounding heart, I prepared a few words of thanks for myself. At the front end of the hall was a wide double door. Then the adjutant standing by this door gave Obergruppenführer Schaub a sign, whereupon the latter walked forward with me to the door. The adjutant opened both wings and stepped aside. Obergruppenführer Schaub entered with me and announced: "My Führer! Mr. Kubizek is here!" Then he stepped back and closed the door behind him again. I am alone with the Reich Chancellor.

His bright eyes look toward me and shine with the joy of seeing each other again. With a beaming face, he walks toward me. Nothing about him at this moment betrays the enormous responsibility that weighs on his shoulders. He appears to me no different than a festival guest. That happy atmosphere that Bayreuth radiates can be felt in him. Now he grasps my right hand with both hands and welcomes me. This intimate greeting at a consecrated site moves me so deeply that I am hardly able to speak. My words of thanks may have sounded quite awkward, and I was heartily glad when a cheering "let us sit down!" finally shook me out of my daze.

I had to tell him about my journey to Bayreuth, about the visit to the Wagner memorial sites and, of course, in great detail about my impressions of the performances in the Festspielhaus. In doing so, I regained my composure, and we now spoke to each other in the same way about what inspired us as we did in our youth. With that, he came to speak of the Wagner performances we had seen in Linz and Vienna, and he now developed his plans for me to make Richard Wagner's work accessible to as large a part of the German people as possible. Oh, I had known these plans for a long time. In their basic outlines, they had already been fixed in his conversations nearly 35 years ago.

But now they were no longer illusions. Six thousand people, so he reported to me, who would never have been in a position to visit the Festival in Bayreuth, were among the festival guests this year thanks to an excellent organization. I replied that I would count myself among them. He laughed and said — I can still remember these words exactly: "Now I have you here as a witness in Bayreuth, Kubizek, for you are the only one who was there when I, as a poor, unknown person, developed these thoughts for the first time. At that time you asked me how these plans could be realized. And now you can see what has become of them." Then he reported to me on what had been achieved so far and what he still wanted to do for Bayreuth in the future, as if he had to give an account of it to me.

But I now had very practical concerns.

I carried a whole pack of postcards with his portrait in my pocket. There were a number of dear people in Eferding and Linz whom I wanted to make happy with a card bearing Hitler's personal signature. For a while I hesitated to pull out the cards, because my wish seemed very banal to me. On the other hand, Hitler was sitting right there at the desk. If I missed this opportunity, it might never come again. I thought of the people back home and gave myself a push.

He took the cards, and while he looked for his glasses, I handed him my fountain pen. Then he signed. I helped him to the extent that I dried the wet signatures with the rocker blotter. While he put his name on the cards one after another, he suddenly looked up, saw me standing before him with the rocker blotter at the ready, and said smilingly: "One can tell that you have become a clerk, Kubizek. I just cannot understand how you can stand it in this profession. If I were in your place, I would have run away long ago. By the way, why haven't you come to see me long ago?"

I was in great embarrassment and looked for a suitable excuse. "Since you wrote to me on August 4, 1933, that you only wanted to exchange our common memories when the time of your hardest struggles was over," I said, "I wanted to wait until then. Furthermore, before the year 1938, as an Austrian official, I would have needed a passport to come to Germany. I certainly would not have received it if I had stated the purpose of my journey." Then he laughed heartily and said: "Yes, politically you were always a child." I had expected a different word at this point and laughed for my part, because the "idiot" from Stumpergasse had meanwhile turned into a "child."

Then the Reich Chancellor pushed the maps together and rose. I thanked him and tucked them into my coat pocket. I already thought the reception was over. Then he said earnestly: "Come!"

He opened the door that led into the garden and walked ahead of me down the stone steps. Well-kept park paths led us to a high, hand-forged iron gate. He opened it. Flowers bloomed here, and shrubs. The dense crowns of the deciduous trees arched into a shading roof, under which everything remained in a glimmering twilight. A few steps over the gravel of the path and we stood before the grave of Richard Wagner.

Hitler took my hand in his. I felt how moved he was. Around the heavy granite slab, which held the mortal remains of the Master and those of his wife, the ivy climbed. It was quiet around the two of us. No one disturbed the solemn peace.

Then Hitler said: "I am happy that we can meet again at this place, which was always the most sacred for both of us."

While I stood silently at the side of my childhood friend, images of the past appeared vividly before my eyes. I saw again the slender youth beside me, in whose narrow, pale face eyes blazed with ecstatic enthusiasm; I heard again his deep, serious, passionately moved voice in my ear, and again I felt, as I did then, that painful longing within me to stand one day at the grave of the great Master who had given content and direction to our young lives. In this hour, the dream of our youth became reality.

I thought about what strange paths, hardly graspable for man, fate takes. Who could fathom these mysterious ways? Nothing can be forced. What happens, takes place out of an inner lawfulness that remains hidden from man.

Whoever had known the two of us, my friend and me, back then in Vienna, would have had to reach the conviction that my life's path was somewhat determinable and fixed according to both external and internal events. After graduating from the conservatory, I would embark on my path as a theater conductor. Already, the first successes pointed clearly in this direction. Just as surely, however, it could be stated that Adolf, with his boundless self-study and his disregard for all practical professional goals, would have to fail. Fate had spoken. Here at Richard Wagner's grave stood the two poor, unknown students, who had lived in the dark rear building of Stumpergasse, together hand in hand. What had become of them? The "secure one" had become a small, insignificant municipal official in an Upper Austrian country town, who pursued some music on the side, while the other, whose future was so questionable back then, stood before me as the Chancellor of the Reich. What will the coming time bring? One thing could be predicted with certainty: while the one remained in the insignificance from which he came, the other, whatever the coming days brought, would go down in history.

How long we lingered at this hallowed site, I can no longer say. Time had vanished around me. I believed I could feel the beating wings of eternity.

Following this, the Reich Chancellor led me through the Wahnfried House. Wieland, the son of Mrs. Winifred Wagner and grandson of the Master, awaited us with a bunch of keys at the garden entrance. While young Wieland unlocked the individual rooms, the Chancellor explained the memorabilia to me. First, I was guided through the old building, whose rooms were already known to me from pictures. In the music room, the grand piano on which the Master had composed stood open—a gesture that moved me to my core. I saw the magnificent library. Wieland Wagner took his leave of me. The Chancellor introduced me to Mrs. Wagner, who was visibly pleased to meet me. When the conversation turned to the youthful enthusiasm with which we both had sworn ourselves to the Master's work, I reminded them once more of that memorable performance of *Rienzi* in Linz. Hitler then described to Mrs. Wagner that unique nocturnal experience, which he concluded with the words that have remained unforgettable to me: "That is when it began!"

Hitler gave me a few more instructions for the journey home. In Munich, I was to listen to the Reich Symphony Orchestra, which had already occupied us so much as young men, and visit the Great German Art Exhibition. Since he considered a reunion at the Obersalzberg to be unfavorable, he had given orders that I should always be able to come to Bayreuth at the same time as he. "I would like to have you always near me here," he said and reached out his hand in farewell. I thanked him, while my eyes grew moist with emotion. At the garden gate, he stopped and waved to me once more. I remained alone. Soon I heard the ovations of the crowd waiting for him on Richard-Wagner-Straße. The Reich Chancellor had left Bayreuth to fly to Berlin. —

When the tickets for the first cycle of the Richard Wagner Festival arrived for me from the Reich Chancellery on July 8, 1940, I found myself in great distress. The war had also transformed service and work at home. Could I justify traveling to Bayreuth in the midst of urgent tasks? The Reich Chancellor had indeed expressed the wish to see me there to have him near. But it was war, a war that demanded more of him than anyone else. Would he even be able to come?

Compared to the previous year, besides "The Flying Dutchman," only the "Ring" was performed this year. Frau Winifred Wagner, whom I visited, took me into her box for the first performance. Once again, I felt the warm sympathy of this unique, unforgettable woman. The next day "Rheingold" was performed, followed by "Valkyrie." During an intermission, Frau Wagner informed me that Hitler might come to Bayreuth for "Götterdämmerung." Wolfgang Wagner, Winifred's second son, with whom I had a long and very interesting conversation during an intermission of "Siegfried," also confirmed this news. The following day, which was free of performances, I was invited to an artists' evening at the "Bayrischer Hof" hotel. On this occasion, I met several significant artistic personalities, such as General Music Director Elmendorfer, the Kammersängers Ludwig Hofmann, Hans Reinmar, Erich Zimmermann, Josef Manovarda, and others. Frau Wagner reported to me that she had spoken with the Führer by telephone. He was indeed flying here for the performance of "Götterdämmerung" directly from headquarters and would have to return there immediately after the conclusion. "He asked me right away if you were here, Herr Kubizek. He would like to speak with you during the intermission."

On Tuesday, July 23, 1940, at three o'clock in the afternoon, a brass choir—this time provided by a detachment of the Wehrmacht—announced the beginning of the opera with the Siegfried motif. I went to my seat. The motif of awakening, solemn, fateful sounds rushed up. Time sank away around me. I surrendered myself entirely to the magic of this wonderful work.

During the first intermission, Wolfgang Wagner rushed toward me and told me that the Führer wished to speak with me. We went into the salon, where there were about twenty people talking to each other in individual groups in a very animated manner. I could not immediately spot Hitler, as he was no longer wearing civilian clothes but a uniform. However, the personal adjutant had already announced me to him. Then he was already coming toward me. He wore a simple field-gray tunic and stretched out both hands to me. His face was very fresh and sun-tanned. The joy of seeing me again seemed even deeper, more heartfelt. Perhaps the seriousness of the war contributed to this, which for him too directed thoughts toward the ultimate, deepest questions of existence. For him, however, coming directly from the war, I was in this hour not merely the witness of his youth, but also the friend who, independent of external events, a...

had accompanied the span of his life.

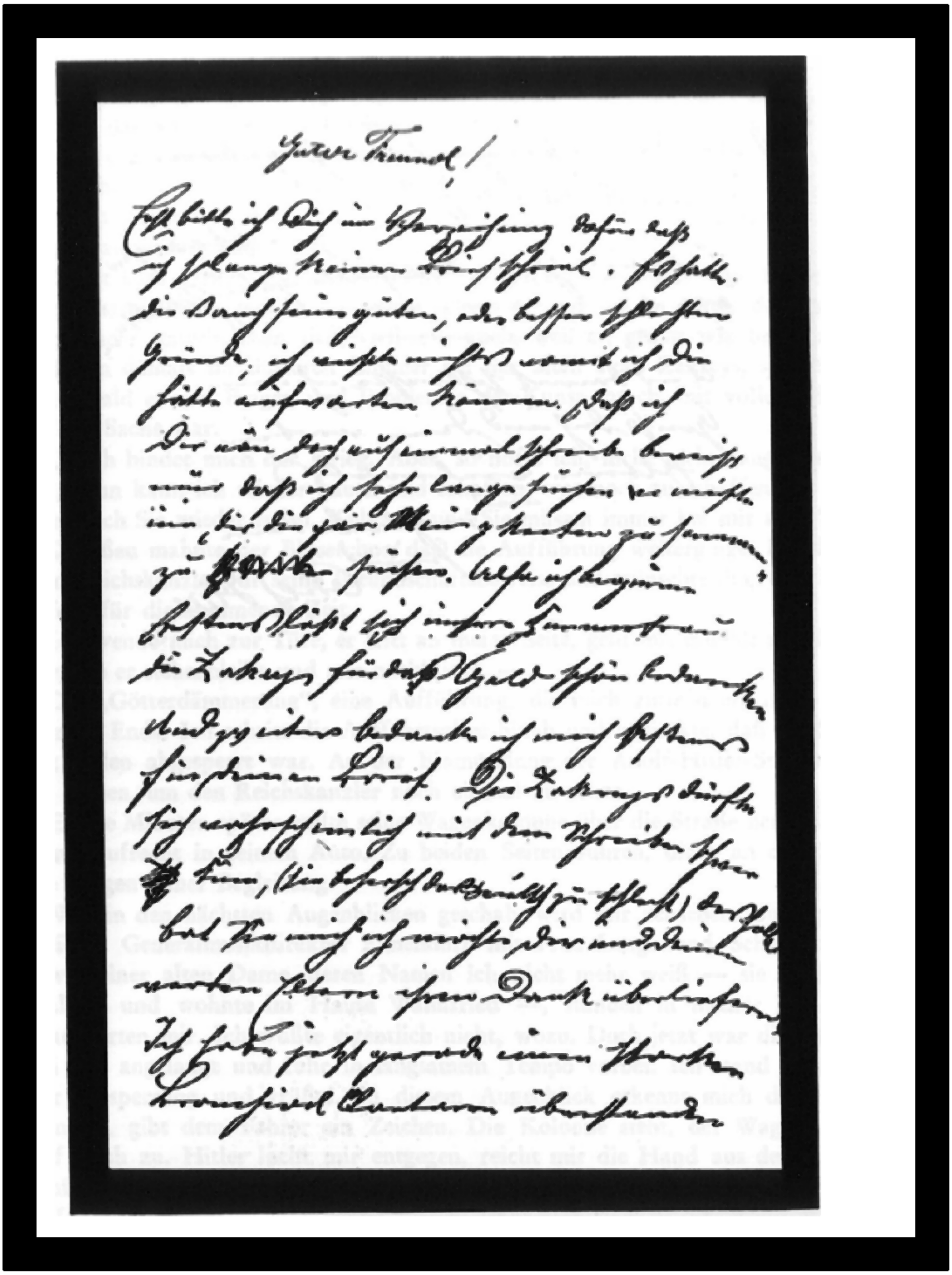
Hitler leads me toward the long wall of the room. Here we stand alone, while the guests continue their conversations away from us. He holds my hand firmly and looks at me for a long time.

“This performance is the only one I can visit this year,” he said. “But it cannot be helped, it is war.” And with a rumbling undertone in his voice: “This war sets us back many years in our reconstruction work. It is a pity. After all, I did not become Chancellor of the Greater German Reich to wage war.”

I wondered that the Chancellor spoke this way after the great military successes in Poland and France. Perhaps the circumstance that my presence reminded him of his own age also contributed to this. We had, after all, been young together. Since he now saw in me the unmistakable signs of aging, he too became clearly aware that the years had not passed him by without a trace, although he had never appeared to me so healthy and powerful since I had known him as he did now.

“This war is taking my best years. You know, Kubizek, how much I still have ahead of me, what I still want to build. But I would like to experience that myself, do you understand me? You know best how many plans have occupied me since my youth. Only a few of them have I been able to put into practice so far. I still have an incredible amount to do. Who is to do it? And so I must watch as the war takes the most valuable years from me. It is a pity. Time does not stand still. We are getting older, Kubizek. How many years more — and it is too late to realize what has not yet happened.”

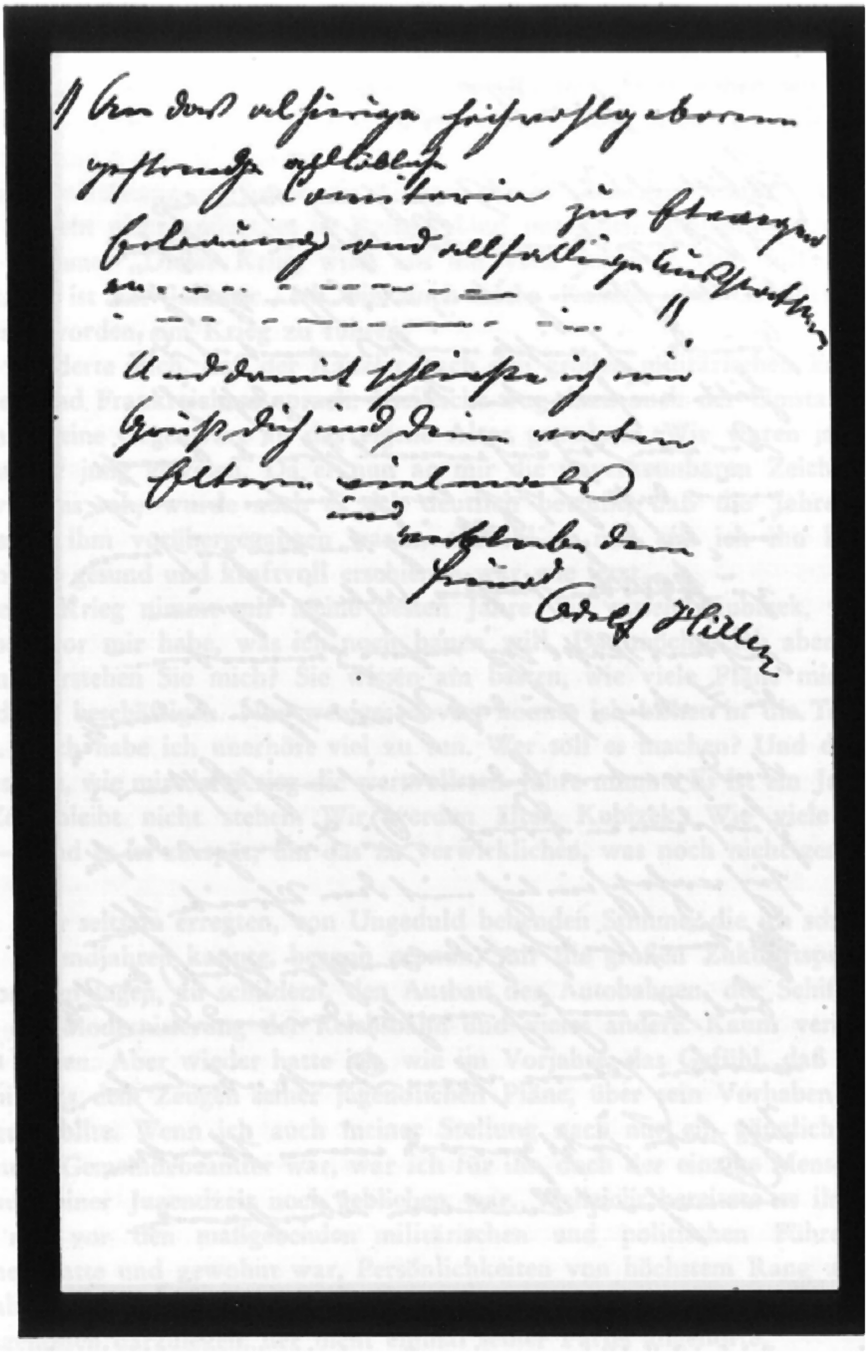
With that strangely excited voice, trembling with impatience, which I already knew from his youth, he now began to describe to me the great future projects that lay before him: the expansion of the motorways, the waterways, the modernization of the Reichsbahn, and much else. I was hardly able to follow. But again I had the feeling, as in the previous year, that he wanted to justify his intentions to me as the witness of his youthful plans. Even if, by my position, I was only a completely insignificant municipal official, I was for him the only person who still remained from his youth. Perhaps it gave him, who otherwise had to speak only before the decisive military and political leaders and was accustomed to having personalities of the highest rank around him, a certain satisfaction to lay out his thoughts before a very simple fellow countryman who did not even belong to his party.



Guter Freund!

Erst bitte ich Dich um Verzeihung dafür daß
ich so lange keinen Brief schrieb. Ich hatte
dafür freilich guten, oder besser schlechten
Gründe; ich wußte nicht was ich dir
hätte Neues berichten können. Daß ich
Dir nun doch auf einmal schreibe beweist
nur, daß ich sehr lange suchen mußte
um dir die par Neuigkeiten zusammen
zu ~~[illegible]~~ suchen. Also ich beginne:
Erstens läßt sich unsere Zimmerfrau
die Zakreys für das Geld schön bedanken
und zweitens bedanke ich mich bestens
für deinen Brief. Die Zakreys dürfte
sich wahrscheinlich mit dem Schreiben schwer
tun, (sie beherrscht das Deutsch zu schlecht) daher
bat sie mich ich möchte dir und deinen
werten Eltern ihren Dank überliefern.
Ich habe jetzt gerade einen starken
Bronchial Katarrh überstanden

Last letter of Adolf Hitler to his friend. When the latter returned to Vienna in the autumn of 1908, Hitler had submerged into the big city and "disappeared" without leaving a sign of life.



„An das alljährige hochwohlgeboren
gestrenge hochlöbliche
Curatorium zur [illegible]
[illegible] und allfälligen [illegible]
– – – – – – – – – – – –
– – – – – – – – – – – –"

Und damit schließe ich nun
Grüß dich und deine werten
Eltern vielmals
und
verbleibe dein
Freund
Adolf Hitler

Conclusion of the last letter from Adolf Hitler to his friend with a witty remark about the theater committee of Linz

I tried to steer the conversation toward our shared experiences of youth. He immediately picked up on a remark of mine and said: "Poor students, that's what we were. And we hungered, by God. With a piece of bread in our pockets, we set out. But that has changed now. Even last year, young people traveled to Madeira on our ships. Look there, Dr. Ley is sitting next to his young wife. He built up this organization."

With that, Hitler began to speak of his cultural plans. The crowd in front of the Festival House wanted to see him. But he was so in his zeal that he would no longer let himself be interrupted, perhaps also because, just as in the conversations back then in the gloomy room at old Mrs. Zakreys', he felt that as soon as he spoke of questions and problems of art, I was with him with all my heart.

"The war still binds me. But, I hope, not for much longer," he concluded, "then I can build and create again what is still to be created. Then I will call for you again, Kubizek, and you must always be with me."

Outside, the brass choir reminded us that the performance was continuing. I thanked the Reich Chancellor for his tokens of friendship and wished him luck and success for the coming time.

I turn toward the door; he steps to my side, walks with me as far as the stairs, where he stops and looks after me. —

The "Götterdämmerung," a performance that had moved me most deeply, was over. I walked down the approach avenue and noticed that the street was cordoned off with ropes. At the junction of Adolf-Hitler-Straße, I stopped to see the Reich Chancellor once more.

A few minutes later, his motorcade rolled down the street. Hitler stood upright in his car. On both sides, close to the ropes, drove the cars of his entourage.

What happened in the next few moments will remain unforgettable to me for the rest of my life. General Music Director Elmendorf with Mrs. Lange and Sister Susi, as well as an old lady whose name I no longer know — she is a painter and lived in the Wahnfried house — were standing near me and congratulating me. I didn't actually know for what. But now the column had reached us and drove past at a slow pace. I stood close to the barrier and saluted. At that moment, the Reich Chancellor recognizes me and gives a sign to the driver. The column stops, the car steers toward me. Hitler laughs toward me, reaches his hand out of the car, shakes it cordially and says: "Goodbye!"

And when the car has set itself in motion again, the Reich Chancellor turns around toward me once more and waves back. Then the column continued to the airfield.

Around me, however, a hellish whirlwind broke loose. Those standing closest wanted to know who this strange civilian was, to whom Hitler showed so much respect on the open street. I myself hardly got a chance to speak. The crowding, the shouting became almost frightening. Until now, I had only seen the Reich Chancellor in private or only in the innermost circle. Thus, our friendship had preserved its personal and intimate character. But now it had become, so to speak, a public matter, and it only then truly dawned on me what this childhood friendship actually meant to me.

Everyone wanted to shake my hand. My friends tried to explain to the crowd. In vain! They couldn't get a word in. I was pushed, shoved; everyone wanted to see me. God knows who the people took me for! Perhaps for a foreign diplomat who brought peace. Then the crowding would at least have been worth it. Finally, I got some air. "But, gentlemen," I cried, "let me go! I am just his childhood friend!"

On that July 23rd of the year 1940, I saw Adolf Hitler for the last time. The war continued and took on ever greater proportions and intensity. There was no end in sight anymore.

Service in the municipality took up all my time. The war burdened people with ever new loads; new tasks grew out of it. The work was hardly manageable anymore. Added to this were personal worries. My sons were drafted.

In the year 1942, I joined the NSDAP. Not that anything had changed in my fundamental attitude toward political questions. But my superiors felt that now, as the struggle was obviously one of life and death, everyone had to show their colors. Of course, I committed myself to Adolf Hitler, but not in a political sense, but much further and deeper, namely as the friend of his youth. It would, of course, have been easy for me to refuse joining this party with the usual formula: "I would like to speak with Hitler personally about that." But it was war. I did not want to claim any special status for myself.

"Did the Führer never ask you about your party membership?" my mayor wanted to know. That was out of the question. I was his friend, that was enough. Had he not proven clearly enough to me that he valued me as a friend and a human being, even if I was, as the relevant designation for me now went with him, politically "a child." So I answered the mayor that Hitler had never asked me why I did not belong to his party.

But then a small scene occurred to me, which one could perhaps interpret as an allusion aimed in this direction. When Adolf Hitler introduced me to Mrs. Winifred Wagner during my visit in 1939, he pointed smilingly at me, who was adorned by no sign, no medal, and since he knew that I represented the Linz local group of the Richard Wagner Federation of German Women, he remarked: "So this is Mr. Kubizek. He is a member of your Federation of German Women. That is nice, isn't it!" That was meant to say something like: The only club of which my friend is a member is—a women's club. That is enough to characterize him.

The shadows of the war sank deeper. To the general hardships and worries were added personal disappointments and bitterness. In particular, the case of Doctor Bloch gave me cause for thought. The good "doctor of the poor," as he was called in the city, lived as a very old man in Linz and wrote to me through the mediation of Professor Dr. Huemer, Hitler's former class master, asking if I would intercede with the Reich Chancellor so that he, as a Jew, might remain unmolested, since he had, after all, treated Adolf Hitler's mother. This seemed to me no more than right and fair. I had already had many an argument with my friend in Vienna regarding the conception of the Jewish problem, because I did not share his radical views at all. I remembered that he once severely reprimanded me when I had, quite unintentionally, arranged a connection for him with a Jewish journalist. In the case of Dr. Bloch, Hitler absolutely had to have insight. Although I did not know the old gentleman personally, I wrote immediately to the Reich Chancellery and enclosed the letter that Dr. Bloch had addressed to me. After a few weeks, I received a reply from Bormann, in which he forbade me with all decisiveness from taking up the cause of third parties in the future. In the Bloch case, he could tell me that this case, too, would be classified in the general category. This was the Führer's order. I did not even know, therefore, whether the case had actually been presented. It also did not reassure me that Dr. Bloch, as far as I could learn, continued to be left in peace. I merely saw that the way to Hitler remained barred to me as long as I did not penetrate to him myself. And this was impossible as long as the war lasted.

The end came. The war was lost. When, in those terrible days of April 1945, I listened with shock on the radio to the battle for the Reich Chancellery, which ended the world conflagration, I could not help but think of the final scene from "Rienzi," as the Tribune perished in the flames of the burning Capitol.

"He is cursed, he is banished!
Hither! Hither! Up, hasten to us!
Bring stones here! To the firebrand!"

But I also remembered, in the tumult of the downfall, the voice of Rienzi:

"... the people also desert me,
Whom I first raised to this name,
Every friend deserts me, whom fortune
Created for me..."

My answer to this question I posed to myself was clear: just as little as I, as a fundamentally unpolitical person, identified with the political events of that era which came to an end forever in 1945, just as little could any power on earth force me to deny my youthful friendship with Adolf Hitler.

My first and immediate concern in this regard was for the mementos. They absolutely had to be saved for posterity, come what may. I had already placed the letters, postcards, and drawings in cellophane sleeves years ago, so as not to wear them out unnecessarily when showing them. Now I locked these mementos in a sturdy leather bag. Then, in the heavy, vaulted cellar of my Eferding house, I broke out a few bricks, pushed the leather bag into the opening, and walled the hole up again, so carefully that not the slightest trace of the work could be seen anymore. It was high time, for the very next day I was arrested and taken to the notorious Glasenbach detention camp for sixteen months. Naturally, the letters and mementos of Hitler were eagerly searched for during my absence. Without success.

In the beginning, I was also interrogated several times, first in Eferding, then in Gmunden. These interrogations were all tuned to the same tone. It went something like this:

"You are a friend of Adolf Hitler?"

"Yes!"

"Since when?"

"Since the year nineteen hundred and four."

"What is that supposed to mean? Back then he was nothing yet."

"Nevertheless, I was his friend."

"How can you be his friend when he was nothing yet?"

An American official of the C. I. C. asked something like this:

"So, you are a friend of Adolf Hitler. What did you get for that?"
"Nothing."
"But you do admit that he was your friend. Did he give you money?"
"No."
"Or food?"
"Not that either."
"A car? A house?"
"Not that either."
"Did he supply you with beautiful women?"
"Not that either."
"He received you later on?"
"Yes."
"Were you with him often?"
"Frequently."
"How were you able to get to him?"
"I just went to him."
"And then you were with him? Really? Quite close?"
"Yes, quite close."
"Alone?"
"Alone."
"Without guards?"
"Without guards."
"Then you could have murdered him."
"I could have."
"And why didn't you murder him?"
"Because he was my friend."

Over time, one grew accustomed to this cycle of stupid questions and gave up trying to make the others understand what is meant by friendship in the German language.

Yet I do not want to be unjust. These months spent behind barbed wire brought me encounters with various extremely valuable and highly interesting personalities, although this was certainly not the intention of those who had taken us into custody. Incidentally, I also got to know some thoroughly estimable and insightful Americans there, alongside those who would presumably have been prepared to smuggle me out of the camp for a single "authentic souvenir of Adolf Hitler"—a truly paradoxical state of affairs, which I initially wondered at, until in the course of time I thoroughly unlearned how to wonder.

Since I was already over fifty-seven years old at the time of my delivery into American custody, and thus at an age when one no longer makes any too violent changes to one's outlook on life—for which, moreover, I found little reason upon the most thorough examination of my conscience—I was left with time and leisure to reflect on my fate in peace.

As I heard the passionate pros and cons regarding Hitler around me in the highly charged political atmosphere of the detention camp, the realization gradually grew in me that our people will find their way past this sacrificial epoch of their history and gain new ground under their feet all the sooner, the more clearly they are able to judge the personality of Hitler as the political bearer of this epoch. To this end, I could contribute facts from my own experience that were known to no one but myself. Thus, the decision matured in me to write down my childhood memories of Adolf Hitler.

Naturally, I did not take a pencil or pen in hand while in the camp itself. Nor would I have accepted a commission for it from anyone. It goes without saying that the book was not to be written for those who held us prisoner. God forbid! I wanted to be completely independent in this work and would not have accepted advice or instruction even from those who sat imprisoned with me.

On April 8, 1947, I was released from custody. What I saw in the attitude and views of some people made me waver in my decision again. I waited.

In the meantime, six years have passed. Seen historically, this time interval is still of little consequence, but viewed purely from a human perspective, much has since become firm and consolidated, so that my now-completed memories of the youth years spent together with Adolf Hitler will not be perceived and condemned as a book that wants to speak for him, nor, however, as one written against him, but as a work that, influenced or commissioned by no one, is intended to serve unreservedly and exclusively the truth and thus an objective and fair assessment of the personality of Adolf Hitler.

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August Kubizek

From a purely personal perspective and committed only to the truth, August Kubizek — Adolf Hitler's only childhood friend — describes the period of their friendship from 1904 to 1908 in Linz and Vienna, shared experiences, views, and opinions. In this way, Hitler's intellectual development, as well as the formation of his personality, become clearly recognizable, step by step, as it were.

"But precisely because Kubizek has the naivety to write as one who loved the man Hitler, his report has documentary value..." ("DER SPIEGEL" on the 1st edition).

"It speaks for the author that he did not take any advantages from the childhood friendship when it would certainly have been possible" ("Süddeutsche Zeitung").

"Perhaps at the end, the reader will gain the conviction that everything could have turned out more simply if people would think more simply" ("Salzburger Nachrichten").

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